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THE MESSAGE AND THE MESSENGERS

LESSONS FROM THE HISTORY OF PREACHING.

BY THE

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NEW YORK

THOMAS WHITTAKER

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1897

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PREFACE.

THE publication of this little book is due to the interest of several cultivated Christian women. The contents were originally delivered in a special course of lectures before the Divinity School, but these Christian women felt that laymen, especially Sunday-school teachers, would be interested in their untechnical treatment of great spiritual principles affecting the sermon, and in the glimpses given of unfamiliar historical pictures. Hence they concerned themselves, after seeking the best advice, to have the lectures published, mainly for the sake of the laity.

But I have another reason for addressing the laity—namely, to secure a stronger demand for better preaching. Jevons, in treating of the great Athenian orators, says: "The reaction of the audience on the speaker" "drove him to look more and more carefully to the form of his speech." "In the case of oratory even more than in any other branch of literature or art, it is clear that the artist is reacted on by his pub-

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lic." And this not from vainglorious motives. No eloquence was ever actuated by purer and more unselfish motives than that of Demosthenes; and yet this reaction of an audience, trained to a high ideal of public speaking, Jevons justly considers one of the three great causes of his perfection. It was the cultivated ideal of their congregations which stimulated the efforts of Bossuet and Massillon. And to-day no course would prove more effective in elevating the character of the sermon than to foster a higher ideal and a more insistent demand among the Christian laity. The author believes that a popular, but careful, account of the history of preaching, such as he now tries to give, will arouse the interest of the laity and help to educate their ideal.

There is reason to believe that the pulpit needs improvement. The charge that the American pulpit is declining was made by a writer in the *Forum* a few years ago. I then made a laborious investigation of the case, corresponding with many of the leading authorities of several denominations; and while I became convinced that the censure cannot be sustained, still I found grave reason to believe that ministers need a more thorough training in the art of preaching. The history of public speaking in the pulpit, as in every other department, proves that general and sustained excellence does not come by inspiration

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or "unpremeditated art," but by the same laborious and instructed study that is indispensable to all human success. The preacher must appreciate the importance of his work, study its great principles, avoid the errors of the past, and train himself in the tried methods of oratory. These lectures, revised, enlarged, and thrown into the form of a book, are put forth in the hope that they will arouse the interest of students and young ministers, and inspire a more laborious and better directed training in the work of preaching the Gospel.

The catholic character of my subject naturally led me to such a treatment as, I hope, will make my effort acceptable to readers of all denominations; for the need is confined to no church. Had I been writing a history of preaching, the more recent English pulpit and the American would have claimed attention; but the lessons which I have aimed to draw, in my more modest plan, would have gained very little. I cannot close these prefatory remarks without owning my indebtedness and thanks, for valuable criticism and suggestions, to my learned colleague, Dr. R. W. Micou, Professor of Systematic Divinity.

F. J.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., August 31, 1897.

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THE MESSAGE AND THE MESSENGERS.

CHAPTER I.

PREACHING OF THE PROPHETS.

No living agency of religion is older than preaching. It is as old as the Bible; the Bible itself being mainly a survival of the fittest in preaching. It is a necessary agency of Bible religion because of the essential principle of that religion, which is the persuasion of men to be in harmony with God. Not force, nor superstition, nor pageantry, but persuasion is that principle. It addresses the image of God in man—that is, reason, morality, and the desire of loving fellowship. It works by argument, explanation, motive, and exhortation. It brings men to a present, not a distant, Deity. It claims to be inspired by His direct action, and to be urged with the sense that He is waiting for an immediate response. The human agency for a religion of persuasion cannot but be preaching. The

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preacher is the persuader from God, and Bible religion begins and ends with preaching.

1. The business of Bible religion thus requiring the preacher to persuade men in behalf of God to come into harmony with Him, "be reconciled to Him," it follows that *the first note of preaching is to be the word of God.* The word of the ambassador must be the word of the king. He must be filled with the mind of God. Very soon man's dealings with God, or religion, must have accumulated a body of divine teaching, and some form of tradition must have delivered this to succeeding preachers. And, however much this tradition may have grown both in amount and application, its fundamental thought must have partaken of God's own immutability. God's word cannot change because God's mind cannot change, although we may go on to know more and more of His mind. Hence, this growing body of divine communications must have furnished the staple of preaching. The new message could be nothing but the old message, enlarged, if need be, and adapted to the new hearers as they were educated to receive it; and they were new hearers only by bringing into new situations the old human nature which had been preached to from of old. When tradition became Scripture, Scripture became the basis of all true preaching.

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Thus there comes to be an historical and doctrinal continuity in preaching. The great company of preachers stand up in unbroken succession, with one heart and one mouth declaring the counsel of God. Its application has to differ according to human need; revelation ever grows richer as experience elevates and illuminates the Church and world; but the counsel remains the same, or changes only as the morning face of Mount Blanc is changed while the veils of mist are melted in turn.

2. Now, this word of God the preacher delivers, not as a doctrine of Philosophy or Science, but as a message from God. God has something for the hearers to do; He has sent His messenger to tell them what it is; He is here listening to His own message while the preacher is telling it; He is waiting for the thing to be done. This is a *second note of preaching—the preacher feels that he has a message from God to deliver to men.* From shrinking Jeremiah, bidden by God, "Thou shalt go to all whom I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak," down to Bishop Brooks, insisting before the Yale students "Whatever else you count yourself in the ministry, never lose this fundamental idea of yourself as a messenger," one great mark and inspiration of all true preachers has been this: the preacher is a messenger

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with a message from God. This has given a sense of responsibility and urgency to preaching. The preacher has wrestled with men as one from whom God was expecting results. He may have tried, like Jonah, to flee, but the word of God has been a fire in his bones. "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel!" But this thought has also encouraged his labors. God is not only expecting results, but is present with him to strengthen his hands. He is not working alone, but by the aid of the Spirit of God.

3. When we ask what is the thing that God is waiting to have done, it is simply this: that men should be reconciled to God; come into harmony with Him. The image of God in us is not so; it has been marred, defaced, and disfigured. The image must be restored. The child of God has been brought into enmity with Him. "The carnal heart is at enmity with God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be." Even when the child would go good, "evil is present with him." There is a great bar to divine fellowship. Hence the one thing to be done for God and man is this: *to bring every thought of man into loving subjection to God.* This is the one business and end of all preaching; and *this is the third note.*

One thing that strikes us when we study the history of preaching is the diversity of forms

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that prevails. Notwithstanding the agreement of all preaching in the three features just considered—namely, that the material of preaching shall be the immutable word of God, and that it shall be delivered as a message from God, and that it shall have the one end of godly living, yet the sermons of the different ages refuse to be classed together on any rhetorical form. The sermons of Amos, Isaiah, and Zechariah are wholly unlike the instruction of Hillel and the rabbis, and those of our Lord present a very different type. How different still are the Epistles of the New Testament, those of the Roman Clement, and "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles." What a contrast to all these forms do we find in Chrysostom, Augustine, and the great Cappadocians! Or come down to the past century, what a marvellous change! And even in this period compare Wesley or Simeon with Newman, Frederic Robertson, or Bishop Brooks. Poetry shows no such differences; the treatment of history and philosophy has not varied so much; the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero resemble those of Burke and Webster far more than the sermons of Joel or Jeremiah resemble those of Chrysostom and Gregory, or those of Spurgeon, Beecher, and Liddon. One simply despairs when he attempts to find any one rhetorical form which is common to all preaching. The methods of

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preaching are as variable as the ages themselves.

4. Yet out of all this diversity of form arises a fourth unity of preaching, a *fourth universal note* —namely, *rhetorical adaptation*, the energetic effort of the preacher to adapt the persuasive word of God to the men with whom he deals. This has given law to the development of preaching in the matter of form. A stream does not follow the lay of the land in seeking its channel more closely than preaching moulds itself to suit the thought and disposition of its hearers. How can it persuade men unless it adapt itself to their way of thinking and feeling? Hence the great preachers reflect as a mirror the ideas and aspirations, the philosophy and the fashion, the virtues and the sins, the problems, struggles, and spiritual currents of their several ages. One might write history from a full record of preaching. The preacher "lives in the midst of his people."

For two millenniums and a half preaching has been receiving into its life a succession of influences from various peoples and ages, on its way down to us from the clear dawn of Hebrew prophecy. These influences have been mixed, both good and bad; none have failed to contribute to its development; and the sermon of to-day here in America is the living outgrowth of all these influences, bearing on its body the

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marks, and in its soul the breath, of all the five-and-twenty centuries. The history, then, of preaching is the history of these successive influences in their work of developing the sermon into its English form of to-day.

I. Preaching of the Prophets.

Preaching bursts upon us in Hebrew prophecy in its most glorified form. The morning star of preaching is the brightest in the skies. As Homer occupied the epic throne in the early dawn of Hellas, and Poetry has remembered him ever since; as Dante sounded the first and most tuneful note of Italian song, and remains its master still; as Shakespeare mounted to the zenith of English poetry in the beginning to be its inspiration forever, so that constellation of prophetic preachers, among whom Isaiah is the star of first magnitude, breaks out from the dark, as it were, a new creation fresh from God, lit and lifted up on high to illuminate their followers to the end. The prophetic sermons left in literature may not be the actual discourses in which the men of God pleaded with God's ancient people; they may have committed to writing only their main points, the substance of their preaching; they may have perfected the form by polishing the sentences and tuning their rhythm into poetry; but still there they stand,

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those splendid compositions, sermons in every line and lineament, moving orations addressed to living listeners as truly as any that Demosthenes ever addressed to the mobile Athenians. They are a mirror to us of the actual sermons which have disappeared unrecorded. The same genius, the same soul that kindles in these finished Scriptures to move us still at the end of five-and-twenty centuries, with what power must it have turned the hearts of Israel when living voice and face and form added their triple spell to the burning eloquence, and language, disdaining the nice limits of literary propriety, leaped impetuously from thought to thought, borne up by rushing imagination, and kindling at the flash of responsive eyes!

Note how fully these four features mark this primeval preaching. "Thus saith the Lord," is the superscription of it all. It is the word of a messenger. He that uses this perpetual preface has forgotten all about himself and remembers only the Lord who sends him and the people to whom he is sent. He stands before them in the dignity of divine majesty, refusing to abate one jot or tittle in his sacred message, thrilling with eagerness to move them to God's will. And, because it is God's message, it is the word of God; and, because God's mind cannot change, it is the same word which has been given to all

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the other prophets, all the other messengers of God; and, therefore, Isaiah counsels with Micah, and one quotes from the other, or both quote from some older messenger, and the prophets of the next generation repeat the old messages with new applications, and, after the exile down to the end, "the goodly fellowship of the prophets" is a fellowship still, guarding and preaching still the one immutable yet ever-growing word of God.

You will observe, also, that one single purpose runs through all the messages, inspires all these messengers of God—namely, to move men to serve God with spiritual loyalty and in righteous, brotherly dealing with men. This was vital, everything else incidental or subservient. And you will note, further, as you study this prophetic preaching, how its form grew out of the actual situation.

The prophets lived in an age of gross crime and corruption. Conscience was depraved and blunted; evil deeds were glaring and outrageous; God's people "sinned, as it were, with a cart-rope." Bloodshed, robbery, fraud, extortion, oppression, adultery, drunkenness, witchcraft, and false swearing abounded. The land was full of idols. If sacrifices were offered to the true God, they were yet an abomination which He "could not away with" by reason of

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the iniquity of the worshippers. When Ezekiel looked through a hole in the temple wall he saw "every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel portrayed upon the wall round about, and there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, with every man his censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up." And God said to him, "Son of man, seest thou what the ancients of the house of Israel do, every man in the chambers of his imagery? For they say, The Lord seeth not."

Such a generation needed plain, outright denunciation of God's judgments against their sins. Hints, gentle expostulations, would have been whistling to the whirlwind. The prophets were equal to the need; they saw the evils with unerring penetration, and measured their enormity. Imagination brooded over them and fashioned with zealous skill the artillery of language. A fury of righteousness possessed their soul and gave heroic spirit. They drew near to the kings and mighty men who were oppressing and corrupting the foolish nation; at close quarters they delivered their invectives in the ears of all the people. They kept back nothing; they spoke as if God were dictating every word. Every sentence was an arrow from the bow.

But, with all their fury, they had hearts stirred

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by intensest love; their fury was the fury of love. Yearnings of tenderness alternated in quick succession with anger. They made haste to show the love of God, and to call back their terrified hearers with promises of mercy. Expostulations and entreaties mingled with charges and threatening.

With truest rhetorical instinct, or consummate art, they made quick work with their speeches. Nothing cools faster than highly wrought feeling. No labored arguments, no ingenious and extended explanations, no philosophical speculations. They struck and were done. Everything short, terse, trenchant, animated, urgent.

Moreover, they adapted their preaching to the poetical culture of the courts which they addressed. We have reason to believe that these princes and nobles had a fine æsthetic training. Syria, Egypt, Asshur, and Babylon had attained, as we learn from modern exploration, to a wonderful pitch of civilization. In poetry, the Hebrew genius surpassed them all. Doubtless a long training lay back of its present survivals. As Homer hides a splendid bardic host behind him, whose long processes of culture descended to him, so we may be sure that Amos and Isaiah hide an equal ancestry of poetic orators. Had the prophets despised this cultivation or feared the cramping of rhetorical art, esteeming it a

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hindrance to the word of God to make it the best and finest word that human skill and fidelity could forge for God's service, they might have startled these polished sinners into a momentary alarm, but only to lose effect in the ridicule which bolder wits would immediately have thrown upon their puritanical homeliness. And then all the people would have laughed with their betters. And then the word of God would not have sunk into men's hearts, and haunted their consciences, and pleaded with them in the still hours of memory and reflection.

No, the true preacher in those days, as in all days, abhorred the sophistries of indolence. He felt that no human word could be made too good for the word of God; that he must use the utmost powers of language when God deigned to use it as the vehicle of the divine message. The human tongue must do its best when it speaks for Deity. In those long musings of the preacher, in which he wrought out the divine meaning, he saw things as living realities, and not as abstractions. Imagination busied itself to people the chambers of thought with the rebellious sinners to whom he should convey God's warnings and judgments. Mind was full of faces; and, as it gazed, words sprang forth, and a moving drama was enacted on the stage of imagination, and the prophet warned, pleaded, expostulated,

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rebuked, denounced, wooed, and entreated, as if he were in the midst of the congregation. With true and toilsome art, he, like all other workers in the studio of imagination, finding its pictures steadying themselves for correction and enrichment, wrought out his sermon slowly and with conscientious industry—was he not working for God?—beautifying the sermon as we beautify His temple and worship to-day, saying that nothing is too costly and beautiful for God. "Shall we serve the Lord our God with that which costeth us nothing?"

And the product proved the travail of production. The mark of the chisel is polished away, but the finish of toiling genius is there. What sermons! what poetry! what colors!—reminding you of those frescoes painted in Egyptian tombs thirty centuries ago—as fresh to-day as when dead Pharaoh praised them! The composition differs from the Attic model as one star of the first magnitude differs from another star in color, all shining with an equal lustre. Vision, imagery, fire, heart are all equal—in heat you have a white incandescence which even Demosthenes could not attain. But in moral conception, in spiritual transcendency, the Hebrew overtops the Greek as far as Hermon overtops Hymettus.

Then see how these preachers adapted their preaching to impress the memory — pictorial,

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rhythmical, sententious, jewelled with metaphors, and full of short, sharp, beautiful, arrowy, memorable, quotable sentences—just the style to fasten its words and ideas and convictions in the memory, and make them live there and burn there forever.

Vital to success was the determination given to preaching by the prophets at its birth. They laid these four foundations, on which it has never built without success, from which it has never departed without damage: (1) preaching must be the word of God; (2) it must be delivered as a message from God, who is face to face with His people; (3) its whole purpose must be godly living; (4) it must adapt itself to the culture, sentiments, sympathies, and situation of the people. These four lessons every preacher must learn from the prophets without alteration. They are vital, unchangeable, and eternal.

Some of these points need to be studied more particularly. Consider the materials in the word of God used by the prophets—not the little, but "the great things of the law." Loyalty to the one spiritual God, a righteousness of the heart, not of performances, hands clean from blood, bodies pure from adultery and drunkenness, honesty in business, truth-telling, justice to the poor, charity to the needy, brotherly kindness. Of such stuff were their sermons made; this is the

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true "sermon-stuff" for all ages. If the later Temple prophets seem to emphasize the external, it is wholly for sake of the inward righteousness; and if their emphasis bore evil fruit, it was because of the carnal hearts on which it fell.

They had clear moral discernment; they saw the face of God's righteousness because they walked with Him, communed with Him in a life of prayer, turned away from the conventions of men, from the praises of men, from their gains and ambitions, and asked themselves just one decisive question: "What is God's will?" Neither did they ever blunder into superstition; ceremonies, symbols, sacrifices, were for them only object lessons, never fees to God or instruments of magic binding God. They saw His spiritual nature so clearly, so profoundly that they repudiated these ordinances, even though divine, whenever men put them up in place of spiritual worship and morality. They abhorred the superstition of *opus operatum* in all its endless forms. Again, in righteousness and spirituality they have set up an eternal standard for the preacher.

Moreover, they delivered the word of God with all their heart. They teach us that preaching is pre-eminently the work of the heart. Only love can beget love, and love is religion. They loved the people of God, even when they

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denounced the judgments of God against them. "Speaking the truth in love" can never fail to be vital in preaching. We must always go back to the Hebrew pleader for our model in this. But, perhaps, we must guard against one defect in their love—too much indignation. Because they loved God, because they loved God's people so ardently, they were roused to indignation by the gross sins of Israel. They were very jealous for the Lord of Hosts, and love turned to lava as it poured out against the sinners. There is too little pleading, too little persuasion, too much invective, warning, scorching denunciation, threatening of doom to come. When we compare their spirit with the "meek reasonableness" of the Son of man, we cannot fail to mark the fault; and when we compare His results with theirs, we cannot fail to learn the lesson taught so pointedly to the sons of Zebedee.

The four rhetorical processes are explanation, argument, illustration, and hortation. Hortation, or direct incitement to action, is the speech of man pleading with his fellow-man when excited to ardent earnestness. When the heart is up it is impatient of long explanation; if it argues it is in urgent motive; its eagerness is ever breaking into exhortation. This is the vital element of the Hebrew prophet, as we have seen.

But the same elevated frame of the soul kin-

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dles the imagination ; things are seen as if alive. Thought is illustrated, made luminous. Images, stories, allusions, allegories, personifications, apostrophes troop into the preacher's imagination. He sees things, and he makes people see them.

Thus the Hebrew prophets employ chiefly the illustrative and hortatory processes. These two chiefly touch the heart, interest the people, and persuade men. The great preachers in all ages have employed them largely, and the preacher who neglects them cannot succeed in delivering God's message effectively. These are two permanent elements of preaching. At the same time, persuasion that is to have lasting effect in moulding character must be based on the education of the understanding. Possibly the Israelites lived in an age and had a crudeness of intellect which rendered them incapable of receiving a thorough spiritual education. Still, one cannot help feeling that they might have been instructed more ; that a larger use of explanation and reasoning, a more systematic and thoroughgoing attempt to educate the people in the principles of their religion, would have prepared the ground better for the prophet's work, and yielded richer and more abiding results.

We need to notice attentively the diction of the prophets. The elevated frame of mind which

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kindled the prophet's heart and imagination is a dainty frame. The soul sits upon a throne, and must be arrayed royally. It picks its language, culls the choicest words, and gives a rhythmic roll to its sentences. It counts no pains too great. It sits at its task and toils for perfection. This is still another characteristic of Hebrew prophets. Critics in every age have praised their diction; even translations have not failed to reproduce a measure of its excellence; and its charm lingers still after nearly a hundred generations.

What a picture of laborious industry their sermons present in every way! Inspiration, with them, was no excuse for rhetorical indolence, but a new incentive to exertion. They studied the mind of God, and they used the nicest art in framing it into language. There is, indeed, nothing artificial about their sermons. We will not even say that they had "the art to conceal art." No, true art is too busy about helping nature be her best to think of itself at all. Art is only helping nature be her best. It finds out what nature is; what defects need to be repaired, and repairs them deftly; what restraints are to be removed, and removes them; what shape nature is trying to take, and helps her take it. Art is herself nothing to display or to conceal; she is just simply a nurse of nature. But she is the most sedulous, toilsome, persevering

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nurse that was ever seen. So she nursed nature to perfection in Hebrew prophecy, so in all the great preachers that have moved the world to God; so, by such toil and unflagging perseverance, the preacher to-day must raise up preaching from its present decline to power again. No toil, no art, no power over men.

And the preaching of the prophets did have power. The ruder eloquence of Elijah, even under Ahab in Israel, had power to preserve seven thousand who had never bowed the knee to Baal. Robertson Smith speaks of "the enormous importance of the work of Isaiah." We have no statistics of that early age; but one fact is conclusive—the religious restoration of the Jews after the exile. What energy must have been infused into the spiritual nucleus of God's people during the idolatrous corruption preceding the captivity, that the nation clung to its religion during that protracted strain, was even purged of idolatry by its discipline, returned, rebuilt the Temple, set up the law again, put away idols forever, and devoted itself to its old religion with a zeal that lasted till the coming of Christ. This was not the work of the priests—they were its foes; it was the work of the prophets, of preaching—a work matchless in history. A zealous industry like theirs might make preaching repeat its work to-day—for God's zeal is always ready.

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CHAPTER II.

RABBINICAL PREACHING.

THE rabbinical development follows the prophetic; there could hardly be a greater contrast. Prophetic preaching was a bold, free, original application of the great spiritual principles of righteousness; the rabbinical was a fearful, slavish, traditional interpretation of canonical Scriptures. The method of the prophet was exhortation, the method of the scribe was interpretation. The one had spiritual vision, the other had superstitious scrupulosity. The change came about gradually, and was due to a great change in the situation of God's people.

When the Jews of Babylon came back from exile they had but one possession left—*their religion*. No king, no freedom, no empire, no prestige of glory—only religion. Everything else was like the Jerusalem to which they returned, a heap of ruins. Their hope, their glory, their existence as a nation, was bound up in this one survival of the past. They valued it now as they had never valued it in the days of

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their prosperity. They could not be great with men; with God they could be great—by their religion. Hence they clung to it with a zeal which combined in itself all the aspirations and yearnings of the national heart.

This religion had two parts, worship and law; and law itself was the handmaid of worship, deriving its principal value in their eyes from its service to the latter. Hence the first attempt of the settlers from Babylon was to rebuild the Temple. No Temple, no worship. It was a hard undertaking; but prophet, priest, and prince joined hands in pushing on the work. Old men who had seen the former Temple could not but weep at the comparison; but the prophet made haste to promise: "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts." Temple built, its worship must be supported; this is the burden of the post-exilian prophets. This is Haggai's only theme; he has no word for righteousness. Zechariah and Malachi do not go so far; still their emphasis is here. No doubt they regarded righteousness as vitally connected with worship, and no doubt they were right. But temple building and temple service are only the external means of worship, and it was a fatal emphasis which they laid on the external. It gave a momentum to externalism from which the nation

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never recovered. It draws a deep, broad line between these temple prophets and the prophets of the past. Already we see that preaching has taken a downward turn. Ritual is beginning to stand in front of righteousness—just now as its patron, by and by as its supplanter. Preaching has shifted its centre of gravity.

Intimately connected with temple worship—its foundation, indeed—is a body of laws handed down from the past. The larger part is concerned about worship and priests, their maintenance, the cleanness, or ceremonial fitness, of worshippers, and holy days and festivals. Part and parcel with it is a moral element, the element which Isaiah and his company had studied and exalted. They had made but little of the other part; but now it has come into prominence, and, for its sake, the whole body of the law centres on itself the preacher's mind. His part henceforth, as a minister in behalf of temple worship and religion, is to interpret this law, and apply it practically to conduct.

The laws are collected and codified along with what is regarded as the early history of God's people down to their settlement in Palestine. A century from the return finds our present Pentateuch in the preacher's hands, accepted as the work of Moses. Criticism must decide the question of authorship and that of enlargement after

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the exile; the point about which we are concerned in the history of preaching is that the preacher has an authoritative collection of laws and history—a canonical Scripture—and that his business is to interpret this Scripture. Later on a second collection, that of the prophets, is added, and later still, a third, of more recent writings generally. So the canon becomes fixed which the preacher must interpret.

Devotion to this canon, acknowledged to be the law of God, and "the binding rule of life," is the motive of post-exilian preaching before Christ. Schürer says, referring to the earliest section of the canon, "The age of this acknowledgment may be determined almost to the day and hour. It dates from that important occurrence, whose epoch-making importance is duly brought forward in the Book of Nehemiah, the reading of the law by Ezra, and the solemn engagement by the people to observe it (Neh. viii.–x.). The law which was then read was the Pentateuch in essentially the same form as we now have it" (*Jewish People in Time of Christ*, Div. II. Vol. I., § 25, p. 307). But the great zeal shown by the three Temple prophets, for its building and maintenance, and the success which attended their efforts and rendered possible the success of Ezra and Nehemiah, presupposes a deep and prevalent zeal for the law from the date

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of the restoration, if the returning exiles brought back the complete Pentateuch with them. On the other hand, if historical criticism insists on the completion of it during the post-exilian century before Ezra, we have all the more reason to think that this devotion to the law operated powerfully during the whole period. Else, what motive for the enlargement of the original law, so deeply inspired by a desire to discover all its applications, escape all possible offences, and make every possible provision for the Temple worship?

The next clear view we have shows this devotion to the law endangered by the Hellenizing influences which followed the Macedonian conquest. The danger came to a head when Antiochus Epiphanes, nearly half way between Ezra and Christ, sought to unify his empire by destroying the Jewish religion with their worship and law. The matchless patriotic struggle of the Maccabees kindled anew the flame of devotion. We discover in full view a body of leaders and teachers zealous for the law, who are also scholars in its interpretation—the scribes.

They are teachers of the law, and come to be held in such reverence by the people that obedience to a scribe or rabbi takes precedence of obedience to one's own father. They are not a body of priests, but of teachers of the law. The

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priests, being placemen all, truckled to the politics of heathen rulers. The sacerdotal ring of Temple "bosses" controlled enormous revenues. Riches depraved spirituality; familiarity with sacred things bred perfunctoriness, if not contempt; perfunctoriness gendered scepticism. Fashion, luxury, and ambition added their weight to the side of degeneracy. The priests fell into contempt with the people, who were yet, by their very law, compelled to depend on them for the performance of the worship of the Temple. Therefore the heart of the nation was given all the more loyally to the scribes, on whose zeal for the law depended its maintenance. The teaching of the scribes replaces the preaching of the prophets, both alike supplying the place of a degenerate priesthood.

Teaching took two directions—training other teachers, and expounding the law to the people. It was a motto of the scribes from of old, "Be discreet in judging, train up many disciples, make a fence about the law." As authorities in the administration of the law, they had to give wise decisions; and these grew into a body of precedents, called the Halachah. The Halachah was still further enlarged by a desire to "make a fence" of interpretations and applications "about the law," and protect it from violation by giving a rule for every possible duty. It had

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a dialectic of its own, a system of exegesis, both ingenious and vicious. This unwieldy mass of legal tradition must be handed down to the future, as the existence of Israel depended on its observance. Fear of letting out this precious secret to the Gentiles, and other reasons, prevented writing it out till the second century after Christ. Hence it was imperative to train up many disciples. Famous schools of the rabbis replaced the ancient schools of the prophets.

What was done by the Halachah for the law proper, which regulated the government and worship, was done for the history and other non-legal portions of the growing canon of Scripture by what was called the Haggadah. "The history is worked up by combining the different statements in the text with each other, completing one by another, settling the chronology, etc. . . . Or the religious and ethical parts are manipulated by formulating dogmatic propositions from isolated prophetic utterances, by bringing these into relation to each other, and thus obtaining a kind of dogmatic system. But this stricter kind of treatment is overgrown by the much freer kind which deals in a perfectly unrestrained manner with the text, and supplements it by additions of the most arbitrary and manifold kind" (Schürer, *Hist. Jew. People*, *ib.*, § 25, 2, p. 339).

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The disciples of the scribes, thus trained in Halachah and Haggadah, became in turn teachers and preachers to the people at large. The synagogue brought the people together for this purpose every Sabbath day, and twice during the week. The synagogue, or meeting-house, dated from the Babylonish exile. Long before our Lord's time it was to be found all over the world wherever there was a Jewish community. The Puritans never attended public worship more religiously than the Jews attended the synagogue. There was first a liturgical worship, including the reading of two lessons from the law and the prophets respectively, and then a sermon delivered by a rabbi, or some other competent person. If the preacher was not gifted in speaking, or could not use the tongue of the audience, he was allowed an interpreter called "the Amora," or speaker.

Edersheim tells us that there were popular preachers in those days also; that the people ran after them; and that the reputation was highly coveted. These popular preachers understood their business. "One must have a good figure, a pleasant expression, a melodious voice; fluency also, speech as sweet as honey, and sufficient confidence in his own knowledge and self-assurance never to be disconcerted. Above all, he must be conciliatory, and avoid being too personal. . . .

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He must carefully prepare his subject. . . . But whatever else he may be or do, he must be *attractive*. Parables, stories, allegories, witticisms, strange and foreign words, absurd legends—in short, anything that might startle an audience, was introduced. Sometimes a discourse was entirely Haggadic ; at others, the Haggadah served to introduce the Halachah. Sometimes the object of the preacher was purely homiletical ; at others, he dealt chiefly with the explanation of Scripture, or of the rites and meaning of festivals. . . . It is easy to imagine to what lengths such preachers might go in their misinterpretation and misrepresentations of the plain text of Holy Scripture. . . . After the preacher was done, the Amora, or interpreter, had to answer all questions and objections. He was often distinguished for his " manners, tone, vanity, self-conceit, and silliness ; and often thought far more of attracting attention and applause to himself than of benefiting his hearers." Such a picture of rabbinical preaching is drawn for us by Edersheim in his *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Vol. I., Book III., chap. x., p. 447). Never has preaching been more effective—that is, in drawing hearers, educating their beliefs, and in controlling their conduct. What a contrast it presented, however, to the preaching of the prophets !

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It is high time to examine this rabbinical development by the four canons of preaching which we saw to be fundamental. How far was it the word of God, a message from Him, promotive of godly living, and adapted to the people of that age?

First of all, we must acknowledge this great debt to the rabbinical development, it based preaching on the interpretation and application of Scripture. The prophets were the makers, not the expounders, of Scripture. It is a question how far they had a canon or standard collection of sacred writings; they do not allude to any except in the most general way. They preach on the great principles of righteousness declared by their predecessors, but they do not quote their words, much less expound them. Now a standard canon is a great safeguard to preaching. Bad as were the errors of the scribes, had they not set up a canon of authoritative Scriptures as the basis of their preaching, it is hard to say how evil would have been its perversion for all time to come. The Church owes an everlasting debt to the scribes for making Scripture the foundation of preaching.

But, when we come to their actual exegesis and application, we find that they so interpreted Scripture that it ceased to mean the mind of God; they "made the word of God of none effect

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through their traditions," or Halachah. The chief business of the scribe was to make laws to protect the Law. Now, the tendency of law-making is to get away from the spirit of the law. True, the object of law-making is to carry out the spirit, but, when a principle has once been reduced to a working rule, the rule fixes attention on itself, and the principle is forgotten. The rule insures it, so to speak ; and, like all insured things, it ceases to be an object of care. But no rule or set of rules is ever commensurate with a principle. Principle is a live thing, and is ever finding new applications ; it outgrows the old rules, and new ones have to be made. Thus the scribes found their law-making always on a strain to keep up with the principles of their religion. They had to adapt and adapt again, and add one rule to another, till the Halachah became a burden intolerable. What was worst of all, law-making never went back to the principle itself when amendment had to be made, but a new rule was built upon an old one ; and the building of annex upon annex went on, departing farther and farther from the principle, the original word of God, until, as our Lord said, they " made the word of God of none effect through their traditions." Thus the teaching and preaching of the scribes, setting out to interpret the word of God and reduce it to rules, ended by nullifying the

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word of God, and burying it under rules and traditions. Traditionalism teaches us a lesson here in the beginning of Bible exegesis. Traditions, and theology, and pious opinions, and philosophical speculations, and ethical manipulation, canons and rubrics, and laws and ritual are good in their place ; but they are always tending to get away from God's word, and substitute unconsciously for its live, free, creative inspirations a set of rules and conceits and traditions of men. Preaching must know and use all these things, but it must never trust itself to them ; it must ever return with fresh study and meditation to the sacred oracles themselves, and derive its lessons first-hand from them. To touch the soul of Scripture is to touch God, and to touch God is to receive new life.

The first evil of rabbinical exegesis was traditionalism ; the second was an unspiritual scrupulosity. Law-making takes the heart out of every service ; it took the heart out of religion, and reduced righteousness, which ought to be a spiritual, enthusiastic devotion to God and His kingdom, a loving personal allegiance, a glorious sacrifice of the whole life to His service, it reduced righteousness to a formal keeping of statutes, and performance of ritual. It had a vigilant eye to petty obediences, and missed " the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith."

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Matthew Arnold said that three quarters of human life is conduct, but that other quarter is inspiration, which alone makes conduct possible; and when that inspiration is loving loyalty to God our Father it is the one thing that is precious to God in all our life. It is the chief thing in religion; perhaps Matthew Arnold meant that when he defined religion as "morality touched with emotion."

Thus the spirit, the heart, is the true aim of preaching. It was the great aim of the prophets; it was the great failure of the scribes to miss it. Their preaching on the side of the Halachah was instruction, both explanation and argument, such as it was; and, on the side of the Haggadah, illustration. But it lacked heart, spirit, life; it turned men into machines and righteousness into drill.

Here also is a lesson for the preacher. His aim is the heart. Quicken true religion there, judgment, mercy, and faith; fill men with zeal to do loving service to God and brother men; they will find out the application for themselves far better than the preacher. They understand the practical working of their business, and will work out rules. When the preacher undertakes to do so, he is like to become a visionary. The great prophets thundered against fraud, oppression, extortion, and adultery; they never taught

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sociology or statesmanship—except dependence on God rather than on Egypt or Asshur.

A third great evil of rabbinical exegesis was sensationalism—anything to astonish and attract. True exegesis is sometimes startling; Luther's exegesis startled the sleepers in Rome. But its aim is not to startle. The sensationalism of the Haggadah, as Edersheim portrays it, is a warning to the preachers of to-day. Some, we fear, are not far behind. Sensationalism has a double vice; it perverts the word of God, and it caters for the praise of men. Just as rabbinical preaching got away from the word of God, it got away from God Himself; it ceased to be a message, it became an enforcement of rules. The authority of God was obscured by that of the rabbi. The standing formula of the prophets, "Thus saith the Lord," became, "Rabbi Eleazar said," or "Rabbi Zadok taught." The tradition or oral law was actually placed above the written law, says Edersheim, and "the reading of the Hagiographa was prohibited to the people on the Sabbath for fear that it might divert the attention of the people from the discourses of the rabbis" (Book I., chap. viii., Vol. I., p. 100). Even God is represented as having a learned rabbi transported to heaven to decide a question about cleanness between Him and the angels (Geikie, Vol. I., chap. vi., p. 75f). Thus preaching

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ceased to bring the people face to face with God as a message from Him; the rabbi came in between as the source of authority.

We have seen already how rabbinical preaching took the heart out of religion, destroyed its spirituality, and reduced righteousness from personal devotion to God and the great principles of His law to a drill in external obediences. How this defeated the true end of preaching, godly living, is clearly seen in our Lord's denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, and His exposure of their immorality and corruption. Notice specially His great invective in Matt. xxiii.

The popular preachers did adapt themselves to the people; they believed in conciliating the good-will of their hearers; they tried to make their sermons attractive; in all this we may imitate their example. But we cannot condemn too strongly their sensational methods and the motives that inspired them. Believe it, sensationalism is as shocking to God and man to-day as in the age of the rabbis.

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CHAPTER III.

THE PREACHING OF CHRIST.

THE voice of one crying in the wilderness brought back the preaching of the prophets. The tradition of the elders went out and the word of God came in again. But we cannot tarry at John, we go straight to the Master. Like the prophets, He exalts the great principles of righteousness, and insists on their honest fulfilment. He sweeps away all the subtleties of rabbinical casuistry, their glosses, interpretations, applications, prohibitions—the whole Halachah and Haggadah together—righteousness lies in principles, not in precepts, performances, and punctilios. But we notice a vast development in His preaching beyond that of the prophets.

The prophets had clearly apprehended the fundamental principles of righteousness declared in the Decalogue. But the Decalogue, in dealing with each class of sins, denounces only the grossest case. Disloyalty to Jehovah appears only in the case of worshipping other gods; unspirituality of worship only in the case of actual idols;

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infidelity to agreements between man and man or God, only in the case of false swearing. When malice rises into murder it is forbidden; lust only when it breaks out into adultery; wrong against our neighbor's property must go the length of stealing, and, against his good name, the length of false witness before a court. The Tenth Commandment crudely forbids coveting what belongs to our neighbor, showing that righteousness must begin in the repression of fraudulent desire; but the principle remains undeveloped. Now, the preaching of the prophets went little beyond the Decalogue. They made little effort comparatively to develop the principle exemplified in the several forbidden cases. The rabbis, indeed, did develop, but only the outward letter of the law; and their countless applications and prohibitions steadily drifted away from the spirit and principle.

The preaching of our Lord not only brought righteousness back to these fundamental principles, He not only seized their spirit and insisted on its enforcement, but He taught the preacher to fulfil or develop the full significance of the spirit, and extend to its full range the application of the principle. You remember His wonderful development of duty to our neighbor in the Sermon on the Mount. Murder means all malice, adultery includes every lustful thought,

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perjury covers every violation of good faith. But duty goes farther yet; not only does it forbid every offence, even in heart, against our neighbor, but when we suffer offence from him, we must surrender all thought of retaliation; nay, not only that, but we must love our enemies, pray for them, do them good; only by this interpretation and application of the spirit of the law shall we perform our full duty to our neighbor; only so be perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Now, this development of preaching by our Lord is no small enlargement. It gives a spiritual depth and practical range to preaching which it never had before. Every old commandment has become a new commandment in Christ. The word of God has had its heart opened to the preacher; he has warrant, example, and understanding now to apply its principles to all the changing situations and shifting problems of each new generation; and the great preachers of righteousness from our Lord's day down to ours have used this light and liberty—not after the fashion of the rabbis, but in the spirit of the Master. They have made the word of God cover the whole advance of human life.

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I. The Use of God's Word.

This explains at once our Lord's attitude toward the word of God which the prophets had proclaimed before Him. He does not sweep it away as he had done with the rabbinical growths. He treats it with reverential culture as the germ out of which He has come to develop His own fuller Gospel. "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil, to develop." He will not hear of any mutilation. "Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail." His whole work here was to develop that law by His doctrine, and exemplify it by His life. He might not depart till He had fulfilled it all. Only when He knew that "all things were now accomplished (τετέλεσται) that the Scripture might be fulfilled (τελειωθῇ)," did He taste of the wine to revive His strength and testify, "It is finished" (τετέλεσται). Then He "bowed His head and gave up the ghost." This was our Lord's treatment of existing Scripture; not abolition, nor substitution, nor annexa-

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tion, but *fulfilment*. If He found in the law and the prophets the germ of all His Gospel, how much less need has the preacher of to-day to go outside of His fuller doctrine for all the moral and spiritual needs of our modern conditions! His preaching imposed on the Christian preacher of all ages this twofold law in regard to the word of God: *Only development, but adequate development.*

II. The Promotion of Godly Living.

It goes without saying that the godly living, subjection to God, the reconciliation to God, the harmony with God and man, which our Lord aimed to effect by His preaching was exactly according to the word of God which He preached. If that developed the law and the prophets by a wonderful spiritual interpretation, then "the walking with God," the harmony and communion with God, must be just as much more spiritual and intimate. The heart of man must be made so new that all enmity to God should go out, and a sweet, cordial renunciation and surrender of self to His fatherly love come into its place. This was in the line of the prophets, but went far beyond their limit. It was not only beyond, but wholly contrary to the spirit of the rabbis which Jesus found predominant and uni-

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versal with the Jews. The hard, legal, bigoted, self-righteous, ambitious mind of Israel must give way to a mind altogether new before the kingdom of God could begin to come. Hence the Gospel of the kingdom had for its first text to the preacher this one great word, "*Repent.*" Repentance, the new mind; not only the turning away from deeds of sin, but an inner and radically different way of looking at things.

Matthew Arnold, in his *Literature and Dogma*, has brought out this ideal. Indeed, his analysis—and more than analysis, his living conception—of the preaching of Jesus, as to its aim and spirit, so completely covers our present ground that we cannot but follow it. He has an ethical insight into our Lord's development of preaching which is as true and spiritual as his theological doctrine (if he has any) is vague and unsatisfactory. And this new mind, this *μετάνοια*, this truly Messianic or Christlike way of looking at things, is one of renunciation and sacrifice. It is the only way to save us from our sins, to remove the enmity against God which deranges the heart, defeats the divine will, arrays man against man, and renders our blessedness impossible. When the soul gives up self it comes to its best self, because it lets God have His own way with us, and His way is peace.

Henceforth preaching has a new ideal, the new

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mind of renunciation which Jesus preached, and of which He gave us the pattern as He trod the way of sacrifice down to the cross. Here and there a glimpse was given to the prophetic preachers of old, notably in the "servant of Jehovah." Jesus brought it out to light and lived it into reality.

III. Preaching a Message from God.

Jesus preached as a messenger from God to man. "He spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes." They were perpetually quoting the fathers, He the Father. The people quickly caught the difference between the patristics and the prophet. He thrilled with a sense of divine mission. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor . . . to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth. . . . For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son."

There is a difference in messengers. One delivers his message as a piece of business, and is done; another feels an interest in the message for sake of the sender; still another, for sake of the recipient; the best messenger feels an inter-

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est in both. The prophets were moved by a zeal for God and by the deepest concern for God's wayward people to whom they were sent. But they were also affected deeply by the antagonism which they encountered.

The preacher always finds antagonism in the world. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." The divine mind and the mind of the world are in persistent antagonism; and just so far as the preacher has the mind of God he has to bear this antagonism. He is always fighting with the evil in the world; it is God's only appointed way to overcome the evil; it does overcome evil, and it will triumph at last, but not till the work of the preacher is over. God and the world, God's messenger and the world, will always be in profound and mortal antagonism; and, when the preacher ceases to antagonize, it means his surrender.

Thus the prophets had that sorest trial of all, to be in antagonism with the people whom they loved, and for whose salvation they labored. It is a sore trial on temper; only the finest love can bear the strain; sometimes, for a brief season, the prophet's love gives way. There is a fury of despair in Elijah's excuse for deserting God's cause in Jezreel, and seeking refuge in Horeb. "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts; for the children of Israel have

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forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the edge of the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away." He doubtless expected God to come in blast, earthquake, or fire and take vengeance on Israel. Jeremiah's patience also was provoked into a cry for vengeance against his persecutors. "Lord, Thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay me; forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from Thy sight; but let them be overthrown before Thee; deal thus with them in the time of Thine anger." But let us hope that this pitch of temper was rare. Still it cannot be denied that the strain on the prophets of this relentless antagonism gave a certain fierceness to their preaching. We owe to it some fine passages of impassioned eloquence; but the breaking of temper proves the imperfection of love. The divine messenger's spirit was not perfect toward God's people.

Jesus felt as none other did the strain of this antagonism. "He was despised and rejected of men." It gives pathos to every page of the Gospels. With sad humor He compares the men of His day to children, in their wilful sport, complaining of John for not dancing to their piping, and then, jumping to the opposite extreme, quarrelling with Jesus for not lamenting

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when they played at mourning. Is there a more piteous cry in Scripture than His wail on Olivet? "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might be saved," seems to be a refrain that sounds through every speech.

But His love is stronger than that of the prophets, and gives Him a deeper view of the motives that move men to repentance. The fine temper of His love does not break at the hardness of sinners, but turns into a deeper compassion, for He realizes their danger. When He warns them of their danger—as He never fails to do, for He never knew the weakling sentiment of to-day—it is not in a fiery stream of denunciation, but by some pointed warning like that in the Sermon on the Mount. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Or He paints some moving picture of the sinner's doom like that of the house built upon the sand, or that of the foolish virgins, or that of the wretched exiles departing like the goats "into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." But it is all done in the simplest and quietest way. No

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doubt there was a yearning look in His eyes, and a pathos in His voice that thrilled men's fears—we cannot paint Him otherwise—but there is no fierce invective, no burning lava flood of menace and indignation. Only one extended passage of invective is recorded—that against the scribes and Pharisees in Matt. xxiii. But the object of that is not to drive them into repentance. He well knew that denunciation is no way to create that repentance which He desired for the kingdom—namely, the inner spirit of renunciation and childlike submission to God. Invective never generates that new mind of the kingdom. His object in that terrible exposure of their hypocrisy was to break down their influence and open the eyes of the people to the true character of these rabbinical impostors. It was thrust upon thrust at the heart of the whole deadly system of *scribism*. He meant to kill it utterly before He finally surrendered His own life on the cross. And yet, even so, the unwonted strain of that long burst of indignation did such violence to His heart that He broke at last into a flood of tears.

This mildness of spirit, this ἐπιείκεια, which Matthew Arnold so lovingly describes as "sweet reasonableness," which characterized our Lord's preaching, taught a new lesson to all true preachers. Spirit answers to spirit more surely than

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mountain lake to the face of the sky. The spirit of the preacher is reflected by the hearer. Indignation answers indignation, temper answers invective, scorn answers sarcasm. Jesus moved men's hearts to love because love charged His every sentiment and tone. His new mind of sweetness gave a new mind to the world. Another feature in the spirit of this divine messenger, gave a new development to preaching; it was the new and dominant interest which He took in the so-called "masses." The prophets had sought reformation by preaching chiefly to kings, princes, and grandees. They had a word for "the mean man" occasionally; they never failed to plead the cause of the poor and needy; but their preaching was addressed mainly to the great. History teaches that great reformations do not begin with kings, but with the people. Jesus preached the Gospel to the poor, to the multitudes, to the "masses." And yet He dealt not with them in the mass, but singly, soul by soul. He delivered the divine message to men as individuals, however great the crowd of hearers. One fundamental principle of His religion is the sacredness of personality. God loves persons, not masses; not masses, but souls are sought to return His love. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" the soul that repenteth, it shall live. Ezekiel had seen this. Jesus made

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it the first principle of His dealing with men. If one will read rapidly through the prophets at a sitting, and then through the Gospels, the two spheres of preaching seem to be like two worlds. The kingdom of God, to the prophets, is a nation. The whole nation rises and falls together according as righteousness or sin predominates. The preaching is to the nation as such ; there are warnings and exhortations to the individual here and there : "Say to the righteous, it shall be well with him." But they chiefly are addressed who are the leaders of the nation. But to Jesus, the kingdom of God is a company of believers gathered singly, through personal repentance, out of the nation and the world. The word is preached at large, but falls on different kinds of ground, only one kind yielding fruit. Each lost soul is a sheep, a piece of money, by virtue of its loss, drawing to itself all the interest of the owner till it be recovered. "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." God discriminates between souls. The woman that washed the feet of Jesus with the tears of penitence was forgiven much because she loved much ; but Simon the Pharisee, who loved so little, had little forgiveness. At the Lord's coming two shall be ploughing in the field ; one shall be taken, the other left. The sheep and the goats shall be separated at the great day according to personal service

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or personal neglect of the Lord in their treatment of the needy.

IV. Rhetorical Adaptation.

Our Lord was careful to adapt His preaching to the habits of thought and modes of instruction to which the people were accustomed. His sermons were sermons for the Jews of His day, and not for a Christian congregation in ours. Doubtless His form would have been very different had He been preaching to such audiences. Exquisitely perfect as are all His discourses, they are not in a form to be our model. Just because their form was best adapted to the Jews in that first century, it cannot be the best for Americans in the nineteenth. It is a mistake to go to them for a model of form.

The Jews were accustomed to the two forms of instruction—the interpretation and application of the law in the Halachah, and the pithy saying, moral apothegm, story, and parable in the Haggadah. Our Lord wisely adopted both. Had He followed the rhetoric of Aristotle or the sophists, or had He anticipated the elaborate structure which the schoolmen taught the moderns, He would have spoken to the Jews in an unknown tongue. His sermon was a simple homily, or conversational discussion with the

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people. Often He was long in preaching, and the preaching held to a line of thought; but His discourse was interrupted by many questions, and the interruptions threw His remarks first in one direction and then in another. One Sabbath, as He is preaching in the synagogue—we are not told about what—a man with a withered hand is discovered, and they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? that they might accuse Him." Like a true Haggadist, He answers by an instance or parable, and not by a disquisition. "What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold of it and lift it out?" This hit the Pharisees so hard that they went out and held a conference against Him. Jesus, to avoid strife, withdrew, and was followed by the multitudes. He heals a poor sufferer possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, and the people begin to ask, "Is not this the Son of David?" In alarm the Pharisees try a new tack. "He is casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." This leads to a new argument by parallels after the Haggadic fashion, which silences the cavillers at once. But they have verged on a deadly sin—blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. He must warn them of their peril. Then follows a new lesson suggested to His lively mind about

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the dependence of the fruit on the goodness of the tree. Good teaching can spring only from a good heart; and all teaching, even our idle words, will come into account at the day of judgment. The Pharisees, cut to the quick, make one more attack. They demand a sign. They shall have a sign—the sign of Jonah, ominous enough—after they shall have done Him to death. And with that He goes on to tell them of their own condemnation at the day of judgment by the Ninevites, and the queen of the South. He compares Israel to a man delivered from a devil, but, through emptiness of the divine presence, possessed again, and by a sevenfold greater demoniacal energy. While He is yet talking, His mother and brethren approach, and He delivers that memorable saying in which He declares that the sole tie which He recognizes in the kingdom of heaven is doing the will of God.

Thus doubtless our Lord would go on for hours with His homily, interrupted by all sorts of questions, but meeting each quickly, incisively, and profoundly. His discourses in the Fourth Gospel are specially notable for interruptions. More than possibly such homilies might be found useful under certain circumstances to-day; but experience, the truest guide, has moulded the modern sermon into a different form, whether Liddon be thundering from St. Paul's, or Phillips

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Brooks be winning hearts in Trinity, or Moody be pleading in some great hall with the mixed multitudes that crowd around that mighty lay evangelist.

But while the form, in the sense of the structure of the sermon, would be ill adapted to our day, the form, in the sense of the way of putting things, is worth our deepest study. The pithy, polished, pointed, quotable sentence, sticking like an arrow in the memory, saying just the thing which everybody feels ought to be said, belongs to the best oratory. The speaker who can barb and fasten such a sentence in the memory lodges there a point that cannot fail to prick thought and conscience in the future hours of reflection. It is a power greatly to be desired and cultivated by every preacher. No man ever uttered so many quotable sentences as our Lord. His style is a model for us in this particular. What an admirable art He had in framing and pointing these sentences! And how beautiful some of them are! Some of those in St. John sound like organ notes out of the depths of heaven. "I am the light of the world; He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." What a wistful note that strikes in the heart! "In My Father's house are many mansions." "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the

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world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Where did He learn this art? What rhetoric did He study? It will not answer to say that He was divine, for this utterance was one of His human powers. Be sure that He had to labor at all our labors; for Him there was no royal road to learning more than for us. He studied His art as we do, or as we ought to do. He studied the prophets, who excelled in this art. We may well study the same models.

One thing that gave such point to His sayings was their practical character. He spoke to the felt wants of men. He said the things which hungry souls wanted to have said. The pointed sayings that lodge themselves in the popular mind are always just such sayings, whether uttered by poet or preacher, by moralist or statesman. Of all men the preacher ought to be practical, and say only practical things. He is a physician of souls, he is to give out only medicines for the soul. He must know the infirmities, aches, desires, aspirations, immortal yearnings of the soul, and fetch out of God's word and love-learned experience remedies and balms and inspirations that shall heal its ache, and rouse it to repentance, and fortify it against temptation, and shame it out of indolence, and make it hunger and thirst for righteousness, and thrill it

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with ecstasies of love, and set it a-tiptoe on the look for heaven. Then he will fashion words for souls so fit, so exact, so stirring, so helpful, sometimes so beautiful that they shall become immortal voices haunting memory with undying inspiration.

This explains also another excellence of our Lord's style—His power to say the deepest things in the simplest way. The deepest things are always the practical; for what is deep except that which goes down into our most internal thoughts and needs and concerns of life, and works there to light our darkness, and supply our wants, and stimulate our powers, and rule our passions—that which has effective power for all that life demands? Now he that can go down into the depths of our being and say what needs to be said, is saying the most practical and, at the same time, the deepest things. Philosophy, when she goes deepest, is always saying just these things, and, if she does not say them, she is a pretender. But every heart knows the face of these things because life forces them on us all, and conscience is ever busy with them, and all the loves of the soul are always yearning for them. He that goes deep enough to become well acquainted with them, and speak from actual vision, will never fail to be understood by the humblest, for, in these deep, practical things, no soul is un-

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learned. The cure for obscure philosophy is to go deeper. Our Lord went so deep that He saw everything as it was, and He could not help telling it simply; His was painting from life; it had the *chiaroscuro* of nature. The great preachers, deep students always of the human soul and God, have always had the power of saying the deepest things in the simplest way.

Another feature of our Lord's preaching, fitting it for the understanding of the people, was His habitual translation of truth into the terms of life. It is the work of the imagination to animate ideas. It may be done by instances, examples, parallels, parables, and imagery. It is the natural way of seeing truth, which never appears in nature as an abstraction. It is the people's way of seeing truth; and he that would instruct and move the people must put it before them in its living reality. But this feature of our Lord's preaching has been noted and treated so often, we dwell upon it only long enough to recognize and insist on its importance.

But we ought to note, in passing, that our Lord never indulges in extended elaboration of His figures and stories. His fine passages are flashes of light and beauty, and He hastens on. His parables are short, but never fail to show their point. Some are painted in a single sentence. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto

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leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened." "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." How beautiful the parable of the Prodigal Son—how many and rapid the changes; and yet what parsimony of description! This parsimony is so effective in oratory!

Notice also our Lord's use of anecdote; and yet one would think, to hear our rhetorical prudes, that the use of anecdotes is too undignified for the sermon. But there is no illustration which paints the truth in livelier colors, and makes it more luminous and attractive to the hearers.

We have left one great point for final consideration, the use of motives. It is this that distinguishes the successful orator. He that can excite the strongest desires in favor of his cause by a skilful use of motives, is the one who will carry the wills of his hearers. Yet only good and virtuous motives are worthy of the preacher's use. It deserves our best study to find what motives our Lord presented, and what desires He strove to arouse. We may be sure that He used the strongest motives that are legitimate, and that the Christian preacher may use the same

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motives without fear of exciting desires unworthy of religion.

Desires may be divided into three classes, according to their objects—namely, desires for one's own good, desires for our neighbor's good, and desires for that good which was God's final cause in our creation. These three kinds of good are, in God's plan, one; for God has so made us and bound us up together in His kingdom that what fulfils one kind does, at the same time, fulfil both the others. In our fallen condition there is conflict; but in God's plan, and in the ideal order which religion aims to establish, the three work together in perfect harmony. But while the good is one, the persons served or pleased are different—being ourselves, our neighbor, and God—and our desires go out in these three directions. God has made us so, and to impugn any of these three classes of desires is to impugn His work.

Notice also that over and against each kind of good there is a corresponding evil which is the object of fear or apprehension. We desire the good, and we fear the evil. Hope and fear, therefore, are counterparts which cannot be separated in actual life; they cannot be separated in preaching. Thus there are three sets of motives which the orator may use, and each has two sides—the side of hope and the side of fear. He

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that will play upon the full harp of life as God has made it, and bring out the richest music according to God's plan, must use all these motives in due proportion. How does our Lord's preaching deal with these three classes of motives and with the two sides of each?

Take His most representative sermon, the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes commend to us as blessings certain states of life hard to bear, but to be encountered in the kingdom of heaven, and certain virtues which it requires as first principles—virtues, however, held in low esteem by the world. Our Lord, therefore, notices these states and virtues, so unwelcome, at once, and commends them to us by motives calculated to raise our desires and remove our fears. Humility and meekness, prime virtues of the kingdom, are pitiable in the eyes of the world; they are hard to practise also; but what then? They are not to be dreaded as evils, but desired as the highest good, for they make ours the kingdom of heaven and the possession of the earth. Mercy and peace-making are contrary to human pride, resentment, and ambition; but they offer us these blessings—God's mercy to us and divine sonship. Hunger for righteousness and purity of heart are at war with human passion and hypocrisy; but they will yield us these goods, fulness of righteousness and communion

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with God. Followers of Christ have to suffer and mourn much in this world ; they will also, like the prophets of old, have to bear bitter persecution. But they must not shrink from these consequences, for the mourner will be comforted by God ; and they that suffer persecution for His sake, shall have great reward in heaven at last. All these motives appeal to desires for our own good.

But our Lord also warns us against evils which He plainly considers to be worthy of fear. He forbids anger, as incurring danger of judgment and hell fire. He forbids lustful passion also, and appeals to the same motive ; and He is urgent in pressing it. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee ; for it is *profitable* for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." He urges us to make every sacrifice to enter into the strait gate, the difficult one, and warns us against the wide gate which offers so many inducements ; and the motives are twofold—the strait gate leads to life, our supreme good, and the wide gate to destruction, our supreme evil. The sermon closes with that graphic description of the two houses, appealing so powerfully first to hope and then to fear.

But, while our Lord appeals so strongly to our

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hopes and fears, notice how elevated and spiritual they are, how lofty the rewards proposed —God's care and support on earth, righteousness, perfection like His, divine sonship, communion with Him, eternal life. Mark also the absence of all those lower goods the pursuit of which debases our ideals, and corrupts our nature—ease, sensual pleasures, health, money, fame, dominion, vengeance on our enemies. Compare Aristotle's list of motives with our Lord's.

This sermon is representative, for the same appeal to our personal welfare pervades the preaching of our Lord down to the end. Study especially the great discourse on Mount Olivet about the second advent; and it makes no matter, for our purpose, whether we refer that advent to the fall of Jerusalem or to the final catastrophe of human history in the present order. We are talking about the motives to which our Lord appeals, under either supposition.

Our Lord's preaching abounds in motives addressed to our own personal interest, although, as we have seen, to our spiritual interest; the startling thing is that we have very few appeals addressed to our interest in God and our fellow-men. We are exhorted, indeed, and commanded to love our fellow-men and do them good, just as we are bidden to love our enemies and feed them; but not because we already love them and

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feel an interest in their welfare, strangers and enemies alike; it is a duty laid on conscience, and not a privilege of ministry offered to our affection. Just so, it is our duty to love God and glorify Him; but our Lord does not seem to have felt that He could confidently appeal to any large amount of love for God existing already in men's hearts. The truth is, it did not exist; nor did love for man exist. Love waxed cold in that generation except love for one's self and those immediately connected with him. To that our Lord could appeal directly, as He did in all His preaching; but love for God and fellow-man had to be created before it could be appealed to. He must take hold of this divine principle of immortal love and release it from the prison of self, and teach it to melt with pity for the suffering, and glow with adoration for God—to find in all men brothers, and in God the common Father of all. When this was done, then He could appeal to love for service to God and man; but, when this should be done, He should not need to appeal; the heart, warmed by Divine love, would take care of all its duties.

Christ had to go about this creative work in another way than that of direct appeals, which did well enough when addressed to the love of self. He had to take an indirect way. His way was to make men love Him. The secret of

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making men love God and their brethren, is first to make them love the Lord Jesus Christ. If we love Him our heart will go where His heart goes, toward God and toward our brethren. For this cause, God has made Him Mediator between God and man, not merely to draw down God's favor to us, but also to draw our hearts up to God. In like manner He is Mediator between man and man, to draw our hearts out to our fellow-men.

And His secret of making men love Him, was to go about among them with a heart charged full of love. Men saw with wonder the multitudes that crowded about Him bringing their sick, blind, lame, dumb, palsied, and lunatic. He healed them all. "The gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth," words of blessing, of pardon, of mercy, of invitation; His promises of life and divine care and heavenly treasures; His gentle answers, and mild expostulations, and earnest arguments, and beautiful parables glowing with divine light, fell upon weary ears, and sank down into souls, being weighted with love. He had brought the kingdom of heaven down to earth, the kingdom which men had waited for so long, which prophets and kings had desired to see—a very different kingdom from that which even John the Baptist had expected—but still a kingdom so lovely to many a Simeon and

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Anna and Nathanael, that multitudes were pressing into it. They could not understand its puzzling mystery, but they understood Jesus, and they understood love, and they wanted to be in His kingdom of love. And so love was born again in the world wherever He moved, and the miracles which He wrought on hearts by His touch of love, were more wonderful still than the miracles of healing and life wrought on the body.

The antagonism which He encountered, which offended so many, and added new mystery to the kingdom, only raised new sympathy in others. A mastering pity smote their hearts to see the holy prophet, the king of love, attacked, driven up and down, and often hardly escaping with His life. As the day of the final catastrophe approached, and the shadow of the cross fell on some souls, a Mary of Bethany came with flowing nard and flooding tears to anoint Him for His burial. When He was lifted up on the cross He began to draw all hearts to Him.

That was His secret of appealing to the dead heart of Israel. Himself was His master motive addressed to the prisoners of self. And when He had won men's hearts to Himself, and bound them to His heart by cords of love, then He began to turn their hearts to God and man. But already they had begun to turn of their own accord. Then His exhortations to love and ser-

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vice began to fall on fruitful soil. Men could now glorify their Father in heaven for Christ's sake; they could take up their crosses and follow Jesus, doing His will; they could serve their fellow-men with enthusiasm, seeing that Jesus was giving His life for them, giving it even for enemies, for whom also He prayed upon the cross; hence they could love their enemies too, and pray for them for His sake. There shone upon men, in those days of loving enthusiasm, a "sweet Galilean vision" fairer than any ever fabled by Renan.

Now, also, when the master motive of Christ was getting to work, a new principle of human nature came into play. When He brought them up to the service of God, to living by faith in Him, seeking all blessings from His hands, hoping from Him eternal life and the kingdom of heaven, devoting their daily labors with prayer to His service, so that, as children with a father, they bound their lives to Him, this daily walking with God and ministering to Him engendered love. Such living with and working for another, by a common law of our nature which we all know by experience, binds us to Him in a love that waxes stronger and stronger as we go on serving. By the same law, service to our fellow-men, to which Christ sets us, binds us to them also in an ever-growing love.

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This was Christ's way of appealing to men's love of God and man; not the direct way by which He appealed to their love for their own personal interests, but a new, an indirect way, the way of making them love Him, and, for His sake, love God and man, and, in the service of God and man, on which His love should set them, confirming their love and making it grow.

He made the appeal simply by showing Himself and His love to men; after He ascended out of our sight, and could no longer make the personal manifestation, the Christian preacher must take up the demonstration. This, perhaps, is the great distinction of the Christian preacher over all that went before him; he is *to preach Christ*, the living, loving, personal Christ, drawn in the outlines which His own actual history has given us, colored even with the blood of the great sacrifice. He is to "set Christ evidently before men's eyes." And then, as the new love is born in them, he is to put them into the service of God and man, that it may live and grow thereby. This has been the chief sermon of the Christian ages. By it the mighty tides of love have been sent out from the cross, flooding up to God and out to man, so that we may safely say that all the creative potencies of Christian civilization have sprung into life at the call of the love of the Son of God.

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Let us take a brief review of the points of our Lord's preaching.

1. He gave Bible truth a world-wide spiritual range, showing its sufficiency for all human needs. And He taught the preacher, on the one hand, to move inside of its lines, and, on the other, to unfold its divine fulness and keep it abreast of human progress. Out of the bag of Scripture the kingdom of heaven and its preachers must bring forth things new and old, to meet the developing needs of the world.

2. He gave us a new conception of godly living, which the preacher must promote. It is not conduct, but a new mind. The scribes never got beyond conduct; the prophets had deeper glimpses at times; but they also were caught in the ethical snare of conduct, and their preaching, although full of enthusiasm for Jehovah and His people, moved too much in the narrow circle of conduct. Our Lord took His station in that inner circle of inspirations which determine conduct and give it life. Micah stood there once when he asked that pregnant question, "What doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Ezekiel also had the heavenly vision when he uttered that royal promise, "A new heart will I give you. . . . I will put My spirit in you, and cause you to walk in My statutes." There it is, the new spirit that

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will cause a man to walk in God's statutes spontaneously, as by second nature. But Jesus dwelt in that circle all the time, and made this new heart of renunciation and following Him the aim of all His preaching. Not conduct, but the new mind that makes the kingdom of heaven, with all its righteousness, is to be the one single purpose of the Christian preacher.

3. Henceforth also the preacher is to be God's messenger not to the solid nation or its rulers, but to the children of poverty and obscurity—to the masses, and yet not in the mass. He is to regard each single soul by itself, as a child of God, wearing His image under all the rags of sin and degradation—a brother for whom Christ died—to be counted a pearl of great price, for which the preacher may sell all that he has. And he must pursue his "rescue work" without striving or cry in the streets, however bitter the antagonism. He must not be provoked to call down fire from heaven or drive away the stubborn from God's mercy, but "be all things to all men," laboring with "sweet reasonableness" to win back the wanderers to the Good Shepherd and His fold.

4. He must adapt his message to the understanding of the multitude, humbly bringing it down to their reach without pedantry or philosophy; and yet he must study the deep things of

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God and the heart till he can make the common experience of men recognize and welcome them as familiar faces. He must store up these deep things in short sayings which the people can carry home and ponder; and he must paint divine truth in the colors of life, telling things as they really happen to men, and not after the fashion of the philosophers.

5. And then the preacher cannot afford to neglect any of those motives which appeal to the heart as God made it. Like the Master, he must make men realize their interests—their higher, spiritual interests indeed, but still their own personal interests as affected by religion. But to save this appeal from selfishness, he must make men love the Lord Jesus Christ. This will lift them out of selfishness, and set them to serving God and man for Jesus' sake. And to make men love the Lord Jesus, they are to tell His story and paint His love. And they are not only to exhibit Christ in their sermons, but so represent Him in their daily life, that men shall love the minister, and so also learn to love the Master.

These are things which our Lord did for preaching. We must learn to preach after His fashion, adapting our methods to the mind of this generation in which we have our ministry.

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CHAPTER IV.

DEVELOPMENT OF PREACHING DURING THE GREEK PERIOD (FROM CHRIST TO THE RISE OF ISLAM).

It may seem strange that we have tarried so long on what may be regarded as the threshold of the development of preaching. We have not tarried on the threshold; we have reached the innermost shrine. With our Lord's ministry preaching reached its prime. No improvement on His preaching; how could there be? Preaching has had a history since His day, a very fruitful history, but fruitful chiefly in warnings. During the fourth and fifth centuries it received an important moulding in style from Greek sophistic oratory; and its rhetorical structure was remodelled at the Reformation as the result of scholastic training. But these changes were simple adaptations to the ages in which they were made; in the three other great features, "handling the word of God," the ideal of godly living, and the spirit and mission of the preacher, preaching has never departed from our Lord's

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development, except to its own injury, and the damage of the Church.

The apostles seem to have followed closely the lines of His preaching, although we have no actual sermons on record. The speeches in the Acts are almost all addressed to unbelievers, either Jews or heathen, and afford us no example of the ordinary preaching to a Christian congregation; and the arguments they used with unbelievers would hardly avail with the same class to-day. Indeed, "we have nothing that could be called a sermon," says Broadus (p. 45) "from any one before Origen." We can only gather what preaching was during these first two centuries after Christ from the nature of public worship at that time, and from the epistles written for pastoral purposes in the New Testament and afterward.

The public worship of the Church, we have reason to believe, closely resembled that of the synagogue, in which the apostles and their fellow-ministers, as well as the Jewish Christians generally, had been trained from earliest childhood, to which also the numerous proselytes were accustomed. They could not but have carried over all the familiar parts of worship which could be adapted to Christian use. St. Paul's directions for its conduct, given in the twelfth and fourteenth chapters of First Corinthians,

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furnish us with a fairly good account. There were the prayers of "thanksgiving" at which the learned and "unlearned" said "Amen." Psalms were sung at intervals; some praised God in tongues which others interpreted; others had a word of doctrine, or wisdom, or a prophecy; perhaps another performed a miracle of healing. The preaching seems to have been informal; a prophet would utter a word of revelation and then give place to a second who had in the meantime received another word. Doubtless the other preachers and teachers spoke in the same way. Then, we may be sure, would follow questions after the old synagogue fashion. Probably most of the preaching referred to the lessons which were read from the law and the prophets; this was the Jewish custom. Or an epistle from St. Paul or some other apostle may have been read, and furnished the text. If St. Paul himself was one of the preachers, we may be sure there was no lack of thought and eloquence. Barnabas was a master of exhortation. Apollos also knew how to handle Scripture in learned and stirring ways. But, for the most part, the preachers were men of little culture and skill in oratory; and, when they had gifts of the Holy Ghost for speaking, they used them too often for vainglorious purposes, as St. Paul gives us to understand. Yet, on the whole, the

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preaching was true to God's word, aimed at godly living, and was delivered as a message from God.

The second source of information about primitive preaching is the pastoral writings of the New Testament and early Christians. They were not sermons, but they had the same purpose, and doubtless used the same materials and methods. The epistles of the New Testament may be regarded as representative of apostolic preaching to the Church; similarly, the letters of Barnabas, Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, that to Diognetus, the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, and a few other early writings give us a fair view of the sub-apostolic preaching. Then comes a more abundant Christian literature. What information do we gather from these pastoral writings?

The basis of all this preaching was Christ, His words and His deeds. He was the word of God which all the preachers sought to interpret and apply. Men never tired of hearing His story; they loved just to look at His picture, and it had power of itself—an eternal power—to draw out all that was godly in their nature, and to change them into the same image, His Spirit transforming theirs. Doubtless the oft-repeated reminiscences were taken down in writing bit by bit from the beginning, or were committed to memory in the familiar language which soon began to

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stereotype itself; but, however it happened, this was one great part of the preacher's business, to transfer the story of Christ to the heart of the Church. Our present Gospels give us, in collected form, a faithful picture of this element in preaching. Neither did it confine itself to the living Christ, but included His teachings also among its costliest treasures. Those pregnant and beautiful sayings and parables would be stored up in memory as the very words of God. Nor would the preacher fail to draw lessons from the materials, and apply them to the spiritual needs of Christians. As apostolic study and experience went on under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the great principles of the Gospel would develop themselves, and preaching would move out of the narrower sphere of the law, and advance into the liberty of Christ. This means that human reason was reverently used in preaching to develop the doctrine of Christ. The master mind of St. Paul had the largest share in this development.

But Christ never meant to break with the sacred past of God's religion. He came to fulfil the law and the prophets. Neither would the instinct of the Jews and proselytes, who formed the foundation of the early Church, have tolerated such a break. Hence a vital element in early preaching was to find Christ and all the

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Gospel in the Old Testament. In the law and the prophets, which were a schoolmaster to lead God's people up to Christ, in those oracles which were stored up in Jewish memory, full authority or precedent or parallel must be found for all the mission of the Messiah, and for all the new departures of principle and practice. We have a living picture of this element of preaching in the epistles of St. Paul and in the *Hebrews*. The ethical element of the Old Testament also found full play in the new preaching; only, it received a deeper spiritual meaning, and a wider practical range. This element of preaching is represented in all the epistles of the New Testament.

A New Testament was soon added to the Old for the preacher to interpret. At an early date a number of Christian Scriptures were coming into use for reading in the Church and for a text in preaching—letters of apostles and apostolic men, and more or less complete and systematic collections of reminiscenes of Christ, of which St. Luke makes mention. Probably much of this Scripture perished soon or had little circulation. A sifting process went on, which was also organizing, till early in the second century a New Testament began to form itself, and receive reverential authority in the Church. It grew into our canon later on; but our point is that a new body of standard Scriptures is added to the Old, repre-

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senting Christ and the apostles, as that represented the law and the prophets. Henceforth preaching finds the word of God in the whole collection, and not in the Old Testament only; apostolic reminiscence and doctrine are fixed in standard form, and a New Testament canon comes in by the side of the Old Testament as God's latest revelation. There are two Testaments now for the preacher to interpret as the authoritative word of God.

It is time now to ask our first question about preaching: What message, what word of God did it deliver? And this depends largely on the interpretation of Scripture. This makes it necessary for us to consider a remarkable system of hermeneutics, or exegesis, which prevailed throughout the Greek and Jewish world at the time of our Lord—an old established system—the system of allegorical interpretation. Allegory (ἄλλο ἀγορεύω) means saying something different from what the words strictly mean—a second meaning. A fable or parable is an allegory; a story is told simply as an illustration of some moral or spiritual principle. Our Lord used the allegory continually, as the rabbis had done for years. But they went much farther. They had set up a whole system of second meanings for exegesis, and established principles and methods for its application. It required, indeed,

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the literal sense (*Peshat*), but only as a point of departure. New meanings must be found, not in our Lord's way by going deeper, but by going off. Words were changed into others whose letters were numerically equivalent. (Letters were the only numerals in Hebrew and Greek.) The letters themselves revolved around the alphabet, to get into a new position and significance. Mystic meanings were imposed by turning figures of speech into facts, and facts into figures of speech. There was no end to this allegorizing; the common sense of grammar was thrust out as too common for sacred oracles; and he was the most learned expounder who could fly highest above the simple and natural meaning.

The interest of rabbinical allegorizing, as we have seen, was originally to adapt the Old Testament to the conditions and thought of later times in Jewish history, which were very different from those of Moses and the prophets. The allegory also furnished the popular preacher with taking conceits and fancies to spice his sermons. But what concerns us to note is, that our Lord and His apostles and all the early preachers grew up under this system. The atmosphere of preaching was saturated with the allegorical malaria. Our vital question is: Did they yield to the system or resist it? Our Lord Himself resisted the influence wholly; He interpreted the

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Old Testament according to the soundest principles of hermeneutics; He never missed the meaning of the sacred writer. If He ever went beyond him in range, it was yet in the line of the truth. There was none like Him. The wonder is that inspiration freed the minds of His followers so well. That St. Paul penetrated so deeply into the spiritual significance of the law and the prophets, developed their teaching so richly, and philosophically, and gave them so wide a range of application, in spite of his rabbinical training at the feet of Gamaliel, and that criticism can yet charge him to-day with rabbinical exegesis in only half a dozen places, this emancipation—what can it be but inspired?

If this kind of interpretation occurs at all in the New Testament, it is used to find Christ and His religion in the Old Testament. This was the task of the primitive Church, as we have seen. Our Lord showed the legitimate method of fulfilling prophecy—namely, development. His view of fulfilment was that He carried out to perfection every principle of the Old Testament, whether explicitly declared or shadowed forth under type, symbol, and precedent. But the Jewish mind, trained for centuries under a system of externalism, could not grasp this; external signs were demanded. Prophecy meant particular prediction. The Christ must be iden-

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tified by a "descriptive list." But what if there were no descriptive list there? Then one must be made. You see how tempting allegory became. It was bound by no laws of language; it worked by the intuitions of fancy. Fancy herself was the pious handmaid of apologetics; show her the task, and then she will first find some striking feature in our Lord's life, and at once cap it with a coincidence from the Old Testament, and the thing is done. What if the two cases do not coincide in historical significance? History must suffer with the objector for the sin of irreverence, that is all.

If you want to see how the allegorical system of second meanings worked in finding coincidences to serve as fulfilments, read Justin Martyr's argument from prophecy addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius. "The binding His foal to the vine and washing His garments in the blood of the grapes, was a significant symbol of what Christ was to do and suffer, for there stood the foal of an ass tied to a vine at the entrance of a certain village, which He ordered His disciples to go and bring Him, upon which He got and rode into Jerusalem . . . and to fulfil the sequel of prophecy, He was afterward crucified. For washing His garments in the blood of the grapes prefigured the passion He was to undergo, purifying by His blood such as believe in Him; for

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what, by the prophet, the Divine Spirit calls His garments are the faithful, in whom the Logos, the seed of God, dwells. The blood of the grapes typifies that He who was to come should have blood, but not of human, but of Divine generation. . . . As man had no hand in making the blood of the grapes, but God only, so this was an emblem that the blood of the Logos was of no human extraction, but descended from the power of the Most High." Could one pack into a brief passage of literature more significations flagrantly at war with its proper sense? This is a sample of that allegorical catching at external resemblances which turned the Old Testament into a descriptive list of the Messiah.

But the Jewish rabbi was not the only master of the early preacher in this allegorical system. The early Church, from the beginning, was composed of both Jews and Greeks; and the preacher got the taint from both sides of the house. Allegorical interpretation of religious writings had been prevalent among the Greeks for centuries before Christ. Homer had for ages been a kind of Greek Bible; life, manners, customs, thought, and religion were modelled on it. But as the progress of "Hellenic modern thought," so to speak, advanced, a gap formed and continued to widen. "Religion and Science," to use our phrase, "came into conflict." The morals

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of Homer's heaven were no longer decent on earth. How could Homer and "modern Hellas" be reconciled? Greek apologists found a way; or, perhaps, learned it from Egypt, which had suffered from a similar strain long before. It was the way of allegorical interpretation. Hatch gives an interesting account of this "New Light on Old Truths" which began to be kindled in the fifth century before our era. "A narrative of actions might be symbolical. It might contain hidden meanings. Men who retained their reverence for Homer, or who at least were not prepared to break with the current belief in him, began to search for such meanings." Anaxagoras developed this process in an ethical direction. "He found in Homer a symbolical account of the movement of mental powers and moral virtues; Zeus was mind, Athene was art." Metrodorus gave the new exegesis a physical turn. "The Homeric stories were treated as a symbolical representation of physical phenomena. The gods were the powers of nature; their gatherings, their movements, their loves, and their battles were the play and interaction and apparent strife of natural forces. The method had for many centuries an enormous hold upon the Greek mind; it lay beneath the whole theology of the Stoical schools; it was largely current among the scholars and critics of the early em-

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pire." Thus Homer was "kept abreast of modern thought." But Hatch continues: "The method (allegorical interpretation) survived as a literary habit long after its original purpose failed. The mythology which it had been designed to vindicate passed from the sphere of religion to that of literature. . . . The habit of trying to find an *arrière pensée* beneath a man's actual words had become so inveterate, that all great writers without distinction were treated as writers of riddles" (Hibbert Lectures, Lect. III.).

In the time of the Ptolemies, about 170 B.C., the same strain and conflict arose, among the Alexandrian Jews, between Moses and Plato. The anthropomorphisms of the Old Testament were hard to reconcile with the spiritual conceptions of Greek philosophy. The Septuagint translators had to wrestle with the difficulty. Moreover, face to face with the wonderful art and culture of the Greeks, Jewish philosophers were ashamed not to give some recognition to the Greek religion. It was discovered that parts of the law had been translated into Greek, and furnished Pythagoras and Plato with their best ideas. But do what they would, "their sacred books," says Farrar, "were the constant butt for Gentile ridicule, and their persons for Gentile persecution." Some apologetic must be found to vindicate

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Moses to the disciples of Plato, and enable the philosophical Jew to retain belief in his old religion. The apologetic was found. Once more it is the apologetic of allegorical interpretation. It was not that of the rabbis, but that of Hellenic exegesis taken away from Homer and applied to the Old Testament. When Apollos, who was so "eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures," went to school in Alexandria, his home, he doubtless was taught this interpretation which then flourished there under the teaching of Philo Judæus. He turned the Bible into a book of symbols. One specimen will do: we quote from Farrar. "Instead of the glorious story of Abraham, the father of the faithful, we get the typical Stoic who departs from the Chaldæa of the sensual understanding to Haran, which means 'holes,' *i.e.*, the five senses, which teach him that they are nothing without the soul. Finally he becomes Abraham—that is, an elect father of sound; in other words, he attains to the knowledge of God, and marries Sarah, or abstract wisdom."

The first strain, however, of apologetics that sought relief in allegory was not Greek but Jewish—to reconcile the New with the Old Testament, and to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah and Son of David. Barnabas and Justin Martyr give us specimens of its use. But

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when this special work had not to be done, the early writings are singularly free from the allegory. Clemens Romanus uses it only two or three times; it is hardly found in the *Didaché*, Ignatius, Polycarp, Hermas, and the Epistle to Diognetus. The strong spiritual sense of the Lord and His apostles still maintained its ascendancy.

But the thing was in the air and could not be kept out. The allegorical logic, having the whole realm of fancy to draw on, is too powerful and ready an instrument in any line of reasoning for zealous disputants to discard it. By the end of the second century we find Clemens Alexandrinus, Irenæus, and Tertullian using it freely. Clemens Alexandrinus labored in Alexandria, the centre of Greek culture. He felt the strain of Greek philosophy; his sympathies went out to these enlightened heathen. His theory was that God gave the law to the Jews and philosophy to the Greeks, both being bestowed as a preparation for the Gospel. One proof he offers is this —an allegorical interpretation of the barley loaves with which our Lord fed the five thousand. The barley loaves signified the preparation of the Jew and the Greek for the divine wheat—*i.e.*, the Gospel; barley appearing earlier in the summer than wheat. The Greek philosophy was signified by the fishes, for it was generated and

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carried along amid the Gentile billows" (Kaye's account, p. 229). But Clement applied the method to every kind of use.

Clement himself said, "All Scripture must be allegorically understood" (so Farrar, *Hist. Interp.*, p. 183). His influence was great, as he was at the head of the famous catechetical school of Alexandria ; this city also was the great nurse of allegorical interpretation for both Greek and Jew. But Clement's scholar, Origen, developed the system fully, and fastened it on the Church so firmly that it still maintains a powerful hold on the pulpit. The school of Antioch, and especially Chrysostom, tried to restore the rights of reason, but ineffectually ; in the Latin Church the weighty names of Augustine and Gregory gave it a prestige which is even yet powerful.

Several advantages commend this system. As we have seen, it is a powerful weapon of controversy, being able to furnish proof from the Bible for any doctrine desired. It was worked to its full capacity in support of mediæval superstitions. Then it appeals to the poetic sense so pleasing to all men. Moreover, it is a rich storehouse of novelties to those who crave originality. It furnishes a spurious article at cheapest rates.

But the chief charm of this system lies in the divine principle of mysticism, on which it claims to be founded. Mysticism means the manifesta-

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tion of God to the believer "as not unto the world." It lies at the foundation of all religions. Our Saviour built on it, and quoted from Isaiah to prove its established use. "They shall all be taught of God." It is the central thought in His doctrine of the Paraclete. St. Paul says: "The Holy Ghost teacheth you." He reveals the deep things of God to the spiritual. Without this secret inspiration religion would fall into a philosophy. It illuminates and vitalizes all the ordinances of God, whether they be sermons, sacraments, or Scriptures. Secular exegesis leaves the sacred text a hieroglyphic still, and the spirit waits for the Divine Interpreter. Hence there must be a mystical interpretation of Scripture.

But there is a fundamental principle in God's use of every natural instrument as a means of conveying His mind and power to us. He uses the instrument according to the laws and nature which He has given it. When He dignifies human language by making it the medium of communicating His thought, He observes the nature and laws of human language. He no more thinks of changing the constitution of human speech than of changing that of the human speaker. As He puts divine thought into the prophet's mind according to the laws of thought, regarding even the prophet's "personal equation," so He inspires him to utter the divine thought

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which he has seized according to the laws of speech, regarding even the idiom of the prophet's tongue. Else language would lose all precision of meaning, misinterpret God, mislead men, and become an instrument of confusion instead of intelligence. This is God's mystic way with the prophet himself. Just so, in the reverse process of interpretation, the Divine Interpreter begins by making us discover the prophet's thought in his language by the strictest observance of the laws of speech. If divine suggestions help us in this operation—and who can deny them?—still they must be tested by the same laws of language. Then, after the prophet's meaning has been discovered philologically, the Holy Ghost enables the spiritual man to unfold the truth and apply its virtue. This is the true mystical interpretation of the Holy Spirit. And even this must be tested by the limitations of other Scriptures, and the laws of investigation imposed on all human research. "Beloved, believe not every spirit" is the caution of St. John, "but try the spirits, whether they be of God."

Now the failure of allegorical interpretation lies just here: it does not observe the laws of human language. It cannot observe them, because it must set them aside before it can take its first step. Its first oracle is this: The laws of language give these words of Scripture a certain

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meaning, if only a man is speaking; but God speaks; they ought, therefore, to mean something more divine. What is it? Listen to the voice of the Spirit within you. Whatever suggestion comes into your mind, and seems to your judgment best to serve the purposes of religion, that is the divine interpretation. Allegorical exegesis may reduce these suggestions to a system and set up guides to show when the proper meaning of Scripture should be set aside; but, after all, its fundamental principle is this: to repudiate the laws of language and substitute fancy for criticism, whenever inclination, dogmatic bias, failing argument, or poetical sentiment requires.

So much time has been spent on this subject of allegorical interpretation because here, at the outset of Christian preaching, comes a false development which requires a note of warning. Here at the outset it invaded the Christian pulpit, being at first an inheritance from the scribes and Pharisees, and then from the Greeks. Its antecedents are all bad on both sides of the house. On the one side it helped the rabbinical preacher to "make the word of God of none effect." On the other side, it was invented by the Greeks to prop up their decaying mythology. The Alexandrian Jew called on it to do like service to the Old Testament under the pressure of Greek philosophy, only to attenuate sacred his-

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tory into a symbol of that philosophy, and to dissipate the law in Hellenizing conceits. It has rendered aid to every superstition that has despiritualized religion and exalted sacerdotalism in the Christian Church. Our Lord knew it intimately from childhood only to turn His back upon it in His interpretation of Scripture. And this rejection is the more marked because He freely employed the allegory in its legitimate use. *But he never used it for exegesis.* St. Paul steered clear of it notwithstanding his rabbinical education, tripping into it only two or three times, partly for illustration, and partly from a weak, but passing, concession to his readers. Its alleged appearance in the evangelical editing of the Gospels does not help their credibility to-day, but is a stumbling-block to criticism. It has turned exegesis into a kaleidoscope to shift the meaning of God's word into fantastic novelties at every turn of sensationalism. And, when we come to the principle on which it works, it is a false mysticism just the opposite to the true; a bald denial of the nature of language, a substitution of fancy for exegesis; it destroys the power and precision of speech, and confuses or subverts the true meaning of every composition at whose interpretation it plays. The true science of hermeneutics has now driven it out of the field in all serious studies and discussions;

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but its false iridescence still plays round the pulpit, giving originality to the local exhorter, and a saintly halo to the fond sentimentalist.

It still does a legitimate service to sentiment, enabling some of our best preachers to give a poetical coloring to spiritual subjects; sometimes it enables one to suit his text to a special occasion. Such use may be allowed; but three cautions are needed—allegorical fancy should not suggest any teaching which cannot be grounded on Scripture; we should make it unmistakable that we are indulging fancy and not interpreting Scripture; and, finally, we should make such use of allegory very sparingly, lest we mislead our people into a false method of explaining God's word.

Now, this growing system of allegorical interpretation could not fail to vitiate the message, the word of God, which the preacher had to find by the study of Scripture. Still more was it vitiated when the simple Christian faith, Greek philosophy, and Oriental mysticism came to be poured together into the same alembic. Not only Scripture, but the contents of the simple Christian creed were changed. The primitive faith meant something more than a belief that God existed, and that Jesus Christ was His only Son. It was a rich cluster of manifold and well-defined practical beliefs. Jesus, being the Son

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of the living God, had come down from heaven for the love of sinners, and had died for them. He had risen from the dead and ascended to the throne of heaven. He had all power in heaven and earth, and was using it to save sinners. He that followed Christ should be God's forgiven child, should be sanctified and led by the Holy Ghost, should go to Christ in his spirit at death, and be raised again in body at the second coming of the Lord. And this coming was the great climax of the future. The believers should then receive an eternal reward of inconceivable glory and bliss. This constellation of splendid truths grouped itself around the Son of God, not for the idle star-gazing of poetry or philosophy, but to be a life-giving motive to the soul. This practical faith was the moving power of religion. One was not considered to believe in Christ till these truths had seized the whole man and dominated his life. This life-giving inspiration was the main thing in the preacher's eyes, and determined his entire aim.

We have said that these ideas were well defined. So they were for practical living; there was nothing vague about their presentation. But when the preacher rose above these lines and felt for the divinity of Christ, definite conceptions gave place to overwhelming impressions of a sublime Presence, too sacred, vast, and throned in

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clouds to be measured by any human rod or computed by a mortal arithmetic. The preacher could but point to the Son of God as the majestic Object of eternal adoration on the Father's throne, and Imagination veiled her head as she bowed in worship.

But when Greek speculation began to pry into the mysteries of the Godhead, and Greek logic to measure and define, when also the decaying mysticism of the East sought new life in this wonderful, fresh inspiration of the Gospel, then the preacher could not rest in the old lines; he must sally out to defend his simple faith. To defend, he must define; in defining he discovered new truth; in his very defending he was sometimes captured by the enemy. The resulting multiplication of new ideas compelled him to take an inventory of stock, to arrange, to systematize. Thus the preacher became a controversialist, and a theologian. Controversy breeds a certain fierceness of bigotry, and theology an indifference to spiritual concerns. Preaching, in the process, lost both charity and spirituality. All this was bad enough in the early Gnostic conflicts; but then persecution held the Church close to the personal Christ. Constantine freed the Church from heathen persecution, and for three centuries the preacher devoted himself to controversy. Creeds grew and Christ faded.

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But what preaching lost in inspiration it gained in rhetoric. Greek rhetoric invaded the pulpit—to its very great profit as oratory, we shall see—but bringing in the vainglorious and mercenary spirit of the itinerant sophist. "Rhetoric had already killed philosophy for the Greeks," says Hatch. "So it has been with Christianity," he adds. "It came into the world in the simple dress of a Prophet of Righteousness. It won that world by the stern reality of its life, by the subtle bonds of its brotherhood, by its divine message of consolation and hope. Around it thronged the race of eloquent talkers who persuaded it to change its dress, and to assimilate its language to their own. It seemed thereby to win a speedier and completer victory. But it purchased conquest at the price of reality. With that its progress stopped. There has been an element of sophistry in it ever since; and so far as in any age that element has been dominant, so far has the progress of Christianity been arrested." Thus the preacher's message was enlarged by theology and adorned by rhetoric, but it lost its inspiration because the preacher's heart lost hold on Christ.

We briefly note warnings which repeat themselves in each cycle of preaching: (1) to enlarge the creed is to weaken faith; (2) to drive out error by heated controversy is to banish charity

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and divide the Church; (3) rhetoric endangers the spirit of Scripture while it adorns its interpretation—three dangers which the preacher must always keep in mind when he seeks his message from Scripture, and moulds it into rhetorical form.

We have discovered what ideal of godly living the prophets and our Lord had in mind when they preached, what kind of righteousness they aimed to inspire. Not the keeping of commandments and ethical precepts, but that inspiration of soul which springs out of enthusiasm for God, and brotherhood for man—an inspiration which is a flooding fountain of holy conduct and every virtue. This is living righteousness in the heart, which writes the laws of God there in "holy desires and good counsels." Without that the will may strive to obey commandments, but always to cry in despair at last: "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not that I do." St. Paul is only summing up the long struggle of rabbinical righteousness, that dismal failure of rabbinical preaching.

The secret of the rabbinical failure is a distrust of the power of God's Spirit to renew the heart by divine truth so that it shall of itself bring forth righteousness; a fear to leave the heart to the inspirations of God's Spirit and divine truth; as if these two were not able of themselves to

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take care of right conduct. It is not enough for the preacher to preach divine truth, leaving it to the Spirit of God to make it effectual; he must also manage men's religion for them by authority in God's name; he must make laws and enforce them; he must put men out of the synagogue or out of the Church if they do not keep them. Hence the multiplication of laws and offences to be punished. By authority he must teach men what to believe and do, and by authority punish those who fail to believe and do. This distrust of God's Spirit and divine truth is ever creeping back into the preacher's mind and changing his conception of righteousness from a divine inspiration of the soul into a human conformity to laws. The aim of preaching is ever tending to shift from inspiration to management. Men cannot be trusted, they must be managed; their beliefs must be made for them by authority, or they will fall into heresy; their morals must be made for them by laws and penance, or they will fall into perdition. And then the preacher turns rabbi or priest—no matter which, for both are one—a petty mediator between God and His child; and the old, large, free communion with God is disturbed, and man, instead of "walking with God," is driven by the priest.

At first this spirit of distrust was unknown in the Church. While the apostles lived and

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glowed with the personal love of their remembered Lord, preaching was filled with inspiration. The preacher told of the love of Christ and bade men follow Him in the great company of brethren, away from eternal destruction to the mansions in heaven. The whole body of believers kindled with enthusiasm ; love fulfilled the law ; such righteousness was never seen on the earth. Laws were left far behind as Barnabas " sold all that he had and laid it at the apostles' feet" to feed the poor, and Stephen testified to Christ and was stoned at the gate of heaven. In Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, the love of Christ is the central motive. It glows also in the Epistle to Diognetus.

But very soon the spirit of distrust began to creep in ; the preacher turns away from inspiration to conduct. Already we see it in the *Didaché*. In all its sixteen chapters there is not a single appeal to the love of Christ, no mention of His sacrifice, no, not in the prayers of the Eucharist. Thanks are given, but for the revelation of divine truth by the Lord. Its whole scope is conduct ; its most spiritual part being the *Two Ways*—a string of precepts and prohibitions. " Thou shalt" and " Thou shalt not" are conspicuous phrases. Even Ignatius is getting to be much concerned about the authority of ministers, especially of the bishop, to whom

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he shuts up the whole flock as if to the Lord Himself. Management by authority seems to his anxious soul the only means of binding into unity that body of the Lord which can be held together in living union only by "unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace." He cannot get over depending on management.

We note three results of this spirit of management which was creeping in through distrust of truth and the Holy Ghost. They badly vitiated the preacher's conception of godly living, and affected the tone of his preaching.

1. *The hierarchical spirit.* If the Church must be managed by authority, who so proper to use it as the preacher, who was often already a ruler as bishop or presbyter? He must act as censor and manage both faith and morals. His authority grew rapidly. Lightfoot has shown us the stages of growth. Ignatius first taught that Church unity depended on holding to the bishop; he greatly exalts episcopal authority. Irenæus makes "the episcopate the depositary of apostolic tradition." Finally Cyprian makes the bishop "the absolute vicegerent of Christ in things spiritual" (*Christ. Min.*, pp. 100ff). Now, when a preacher is going to set up righteousness by authority rather than by inspiration, his sermon will take a very different turn. Instead of presenting the living, loving Christ to

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the heart as a divine power to melt, captivate, and move till the love of Christ shall constrain to holiest service, the preacher must admonish and lay down laws, and denounce sins, and warn of punishment to come.

2. *Management of faith by authority* is a second result. Living faith is not made by authority, it is born of the Holy Ghost. He grafts the word of God in the soul, and creates faith. All that the preacher can do is to put that word into the mind, and leave it to the Holy Ghost. And the word of God is so full of life-giving truth that, if lovingly presented, explained, argued, and applied to a receptive heart, the power of God will create faith without help from authority. Children, of course, and, perhaps, the great majority of men, have to take the word of God, with its explanation and doctrines on authority; and authority is good for this use. But still the preacher's effort should be to address himself to the reason of his hearers as far as they have capacity for argument. He wants to get them off the ground of authority, which is outside of the soul and precarious, on to the inner and abiding ground of reason and conscience. He wants them to believe because they see that the Christian faith is true, and not because they are told so. With the great majority of Christians he can succeed only partially; but there is a higher

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order of mind, of inestimable value to every cause, that insists on reasoning and investigating for itself. It shows an impatience of authority, an imperious determination to get away from the external rule of tradition to that inner conviction which comes only from seeing the truth for one-self, and that inner persuasion which comes from seeing with one's own eyes the attraction of its beauty. More and more such minds emancipate themselves from authority, love the face of truth, seek for it as for hid treasure, discover it, and show it with delight to their fellows. These are the minds which discover the new worlds, the choice organs of the Holy Ghost for searching into the spirit of God's word as our Lord did, for developing the richness of its meaning, and for applying it to the ever-changing needs of human progress. You cannot manage the faith of these minds by decrees; to shut them up to authority is to make them infidels or heretics; to drive them off is paralysis to the Church.

But when, in the course of centuries, distrust of the Holy Ghost and the truth crept in, and the anxious idea of management came to prevail, when the preacher learned to use authority rather than reason to settle controversy, and went out to press the despotic argument on free intelligence and conscience, Christian faith received a deadly blow which intimidated its finest

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intellects, or drove them off into heresy and scepticism. It was an evil day for preaching when it discarded reason or degraded it to the servile work of supporting the despotism of dogma. The evil disclosed its monstrous proportions first in the Moslem onset, and then in the long slavery of the schoolmen to the superstitions of Rome.

3. *Management of morals by discipline* is the third monstrosity which grew out of the system of distrust and management. Now, the way of our Lord and the apostles, in dealing with a falling brother, was a broad, free, trustful, inspiring way. The woman who was a sinner and came to wash the Saviour's feet in the tears of penitence, was not put off on trial, nor made an example of, nor required to expiate her sins by tears or any kind of penance; she was forgiven on the spot, taken on trust, and encouraged to "go and sin no more." The prodigal who returned in penitence, had not so much as a chiding word said to him, but was welcomed back with open arms and feasted. The publican who beat on his breast as he confessed his sins in the temple, went down to his house justified that selfsame hour. St. Peter's triple denial in our Lord's crisis—even that sin was not mentioned to him—only the question, "Lovest thou Me?" and then a return to his post of duty—"Feed My sheep." Once St. Paul inflicted discipline on a

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very great offender in Corinth—the incestuous man—but how eagerly he bade the Corinthians take him back as soon as he repented, and guard and encourage him by fellowship and pardon! Who needs that fellowship, and all the means of grace, and all the good cheer that God and man can give him, so much as he that has fallen, and is disheartened, and dares not so much as lift up his head, and expects God and man alike to turn against him? And what can touch his heart, and confirm his repentance, and inspire him with hope and love so much as to be lifted up by brotherly hands, and assured of pardon, and received back into the sympathy and fellowship of the Church, and strengthened by sacrament and every other means of grace? Under such a system of repentance and pardon the clear business of the preacher, in dealing with the fallen, is to convict of sin, warn of danger, and plead the love of Christ until the sinner repents; and then he is to hasten and bind up the wounds he has made, and point to the mercy of Christ, and welcome back to fellowship and the sacramental feast. Is the caution needed that repentance involves reparation and restitution?

But when the Church began to be fearful and turn anxiously to management, forgetting the power of God, conscience, and truth, a change took place in the treatment of offenders. They

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must be managed by discipline. They were cut off from fellowship and the sacraments, in some cases even from preaching and worship—as if *they* were not the most in need of these very helps—they were clad in garments of shame, humiliated before the world, put to penance of tears and hard living, at least, and so, put on probation, made to expiate their sins, set up as an example to others; and this was kept up for a longer or shorter time according to the enormity of the offence. By and by the whole thing was expanded into a set system, with classes, and confessions, and performances, and graduated terms of suspension—some poor wretches being kept off from sacraments and fellowship until their dying day. St. Peter would have been one of these last unfortunates, had the system prevailed under the immediate ministry of Christ—with such consequences as only Church history can calculate or tell.

Now, if this penitentiary system of management is the way to produce godly living, it is easy to see what arguments and motives the preacher should use—just the opposite to those used under the primitive system of our Lord. Plainly the whole tone of preaching will change. The inspiration of the love of Christ will fade out of the sermon, and the terrible consequences of sin and the need of expiations will be accentuated

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more and more. We find this change, I think, passing over the spirit of preaching after the second or third century. We shall see it reaching its head in the preaching of the Dark Ages.

But, perhaps, the worst effect of all was that wrought on the preacher himself, changing him from a messenger of God into a petty mediator and dispenser of God's mercies and punishments. There is an important difference between administering divine power as a *priestly agent* of God and delivering spiritual truth as a *messenger* of God. In the former case, the priest needs to know and explain nothing except the function he is to perform, and the result that God will work by its means. He is simply charged, by virtue of his official authority, with occult divine power, and he gives it off in the act when that is properly performed. He forgives sins by his absolution, or imparts divine life by baptism, or conveys into the Eucharist divine things, by his official utterance of the consecrating words. The recipient may need to be duly penitent, lest "he put a bar" in the way of grace, but the operation itself does not depend on his intelligence and spiritual persuasion. The priest is charged with the divine power and performs the appointed act; the recipient submits duly to the act and receives the charge. Not just now raising the question of such priestly power, but granting it

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for the sake of argument, we still see that there is no need here for reasoning or persuasion on the part of the divine agent. He is a mediator, not a messenger ; a performer, not a prophet.

But the case is altogether different when the messenger delivers a divine truth. He must now be a reasoner and a pleader. And this he cannot be till he has taken up the divine thought into his own thought, and thus become charged with its moral power. The truth has entered into his reason and soul. He is charged with spiritual thought and feeling, and he gives off the divine power, not by performance of a function, but by energetic reasoning to show the thought, and by ardent pleading to move the will.

The processes of the sacerdotal mediator are wholly different from those of the preacher ; so different that they cannot well work together in the same mind. He that works by mediatorial acts and emphasizes their value, is not likely to throw his vital energies into preaching ; and he that realizes the power of the truth to sanctify and free the soul, and sets himself continually to wrestle with the intelligence and heart, is sure to react from the *opus operatum* of functions. The two tendencies are divergent, not to say antagonistic ; the divine agent must specialize and devote himself in one direction. Exceptional cases

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there may be, but history shows that the priest and the preacher flourish after an inverse proportion. As the priest came in under the growing system of management, the preacher went out or fell into the background. Sacerdotal functions left little room or use for the preacher.

Effect of Greek Rhetorical Culture.

During the first six centuries of our era preaching came under the most powerful rhetorical influence that ever gave it moulding—namely, Greek rhetorical culture. From the days of Pericles down to the Moslem era, a thousand years, oratory was cultivated with passion by the matchless intellect of the Greek. While liberty lasted, it was inspired by the noblest of causes, and culminated in Demosthenes and Cicero, who respectively in Greece and Rome closed the reign of free speech in the cause of freedom. The genius of Aristotle, already waiting before Demosthenes expired, studied the secrets of the master orators in those palmiest days of eloquence, and constructed the art of rhetoric in a work which has never been superseded. Cicero learned his art and taught it to the Romans. A century later Quintillian produced out of all these materials the masterpiece of Roman rhetoric. The Cæsars had already destroyed liberty and robbed the orator of his most inspiring cause till

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religion enlisted him in its yet higher service; but Quintillian still found room for the art in training Roman students for the bar. The Roman courts were kept busy with multitudinous suits, and these involved interests second only to those of political freedom. Philosophy also called into her service hundreds of lecturers or sophists, who taught her principles in every city. Rhetoric, or the study of oratory, became during all the early Christian centuries one principal branch of polite education. Schools were set up in every city; rhetorical chairs were endowed by emperors and others; and the rhetoricians often received enormous fees. Oratory was studied with an enthusiasm and industry never since rivalled. The manner of developing a subject, the choice of language, the skilful use of motives, and the training of voice and gesture were brought to perfection. Model speeches on all possible cases were set to students for study and imitation. Literature was searched for illustrations, and the young orator was taught to introduce telling passages with effect. Few great orators were produced, but probably there never were so many trained and clever speakers, never so many excellent critics, never so great a requirement laid on teachers and orators to employ the best rhetorical art.

When you remember that preaching entered

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this world of Greek rhetorical culture at the very start, that the churches which St. Paul founded in Asia Minor and Europe were composed principally of Greeks or men raised under Greek culture, it is clear that Greek rhetoric must have influenced preaching strongly from the first. How could the Greek preachers left by the apostle in Thessalonica, Corinth, and Ephesus, use any other forms of language than those under which their ideas of speaking had been educated? True, there were not many as highly trained as the Alexandrian Apollos; but still the lesser lights were Greek; and, in their very efforts to instruct and persuade, must have followed Greek methods. No doubt they did it unconsciously, and when the Church became aware of the fact there was resistance, for the Church dreaded the sophist and rhetorician. But when Greek sophists and rhetoricians were converted and consecrated their talents to preaching the Gospel, how could they but use that art of speaking which they believed would enable them to preach it most effectively? They made an early appearance in the Church. Justin Martyr was a philosopher and a lecturer, and, as an educated man, was a rhetorician. Many of the great preachers of that age, we know, had been educated as lawyers and rhetoricians; among them Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Gregory Thauma-

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turgus, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa, Ephrem Syrus, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory the Great. After the middle of the third century, during a long lull in persecution, church worship assumed a large and elaborate form. Fine churches were erected; numerous converts also were drawn in who had been educated in all the culture of the Greeks. After Constantine gave imperial patronage to Christianity, their number was immensely increased, and they demanded magnificence in their religious celebrations. Along with all this, the demand for preachers of rhetorical culture increased in proportion. Moreover, it came to be felt in the Church itself that preachers must train themselves in rhetoric in order to do their best work for the Gospel. Cyprian, in the middle of the third century, edited a phraseological dictionary of Cicero for the use of preachers. Augustine, who had been a teacher of rhetoric, prepared an extended treatise on the art of preaching.

Thus, after long resistance, Greek rhetoric was taken into the pulpit on its own merits, and preaching received a great rhetorical development to adapt it to the Greek culture of its hearers. The results of this combination were both good and bad. As long as the old enthusiasm for Christ and souls endured, and the preacher

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drank deep of spiritual truth from the wells of Scripture, and then delivered his sermon as a living message from God, the results of the new rhetoric were extraordinary. During the fourth and fifth centuries there sprung up a succession of eloquent preachers who have never been surpassed. They are represented to us by Basil, the two Gregories, Ephrem Syrus, Chrysostom, and Augustine. Their wonderful success shows us what the best rhetorical culture can do for preaching when it is combined with the other elements.

Let us see what it did for the preacher then; for that is what it can do for the preacher to-day. First of all, it taught him refinement of style, and the use of a copious, easy, graceful, and rhythmical diction. It showed him how to analyze, explain, and argue. It gave him also the art of adorning his speech with illustrations and passages drawn from the finest sources. But chiefly he learned the use of motives. They are the powers of persuasion. The orator must understand the desires, affections, aspirations, prepossessions, and instincts of his hearers; on the other hand, he must know their prejudices, aversions, and limitations. He must know the passions as a musician knows the chords. He must understand also the combination of motives. There was nothing to which the ancient rhetoric gave

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more attention than to this. Aristotle considered every case of feeling, and, with a masterly hand, teaches us how to allay whatever is unfriendly, and to arouse and kindle every passion that will serve our turn. The classical orator had these things at his fingers' end. The thing can be learned; it is the chief thing in oratory; the ancient rhetorician taught the art, and the ancient student mastered the teaching. Would that the preacher of to-day would study the application of motives as Chrysostom and Augustine did! It made them ready for any emergency, no matter how suddenly it might arise. Consider Chrysostom's plea for the emperor's fallen favorite, Eutropius. There he is clinging to the asylum of the altar who yesterday had been the dread and envy of all. The mob of enemies are crowding around him; the vast church is filled with indignant sufferers from his oppression. The sanctity of the altar will not much longer protect him. Chrysostom springs in between. He dares not plead for pardon while the mob is still full of fury. He must set in train some other thought more consonant with their present mood. He must establish sympathy between himself and them. He begins: "If ever there was a season in our lives in which we might exclaim, 'Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity!' is it not in the moment before us?

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Where is now the pomp, where the costly insignia of the consulship? Where the blaze of torches that preceded the triumphal march? Where is the tumult that re-echoed through the city, where the noisy acclamations, the fulsome homage of the flatterers! All have vanished." Thus he substitutes in place of fury at the wretch, the wonder at his fall, a feeling so close to their mood that they easily sympathize with the speaker's amazement. The next step is equally skilful; he depicts the misery of the fugitive. "Every moment he sees the sword suspended over his head; every moment he awaits the announcement of the sentence, and measures in imagination the road that leads to the scaffold. . . . Behold him there at the foot of the altar, chained by fear as in a dungeon! . . . Even yesterday, when the soldiers came to drag him to his fate, you saw in what an agony of terror he rushed to the altar. The paleness of death was on his face; his teeth chattered; his whole frame was convulsed; his tongue stammered forth incoherent words." Then he links the poor culprit's peril with the glory of the Church, which was so dear to them. He bids them see, in this asylum, the majesty and honor of the sanctuary that can protect even a wretch like Eutropius, and makes them feel how their own honor is concerned in preserving the asylum safe. Now

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he attacks their vengeance as so contrary to their religion, and quotes the Saviour's prayer for His enemies on the cross. He bids them see in this sudden fall the insecurity of their own fortunes which God may shatter at a blow if they refuse to pardon. By this time the pleader discovers that their mood is changed; he can see the tears beginning to flow. Then he presses his plea. He speaks of the emperor's willingness to forgive, and urges them to follow his example. He plies them with other motives, and assails their hearts on every side. He has gained his point, and he exhorts them to join him in a plea for mercy to the emperor. It is thus that a consummate knowledge of the passions enabled the great preacher to mould his hearers to his will. No wonder he was called the "Golden-tongued."

As to the structure of the sermon, Greek rhetoric taught the preacher how to deal with either the topical or the expository sermon. Five centuries before Christ, Corax the Sicilian had hit upon the principal parts of an oration, and little change has been made since. All the great Greek orators followed his plan, and we are following it in our day. Similarly, the Greek rhetoricians had worked out the best way of expounding the text of a writer. Origen seems to have been the first to apply it to the exposition of Scripture. But, from his time, the Christian

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preacher commented on the text of sacred writers after the same fashion as the sophist commented on the text of Homer or Æschylus, Plato or Chrysippus.

Another part of ancient rhetorical training was readiness. A master would assign a subject to a student, and require him to speak on it without further notice. To do so he had to study the best models till he followed their methods instinctively. He had to store his mind with well-digested information on a great variety of subjects, and have it at his finger's end. This trained readiness accounts for the incredible copiousness of preachers who, like Origen, Chrysostom, and Augustine, expounded Scripture and preached, often without time for preparation, day after day for weeks and months at a time. They had full minds, well-digested knowledge, finely disciplined powers of analysis and construction, and trained use of language and motives. What power over men would such training in oratory give the preacher to-day!

But abuse is the constant shadow of use. Nothing good but can be perverted; and the better the legitimate use, the worse the abuse. Rhetoric has always been liable to great abuse; it is full of temptations to the preacher. This is no argument for its abandonment, but for the most careful circumspection in its use. Rheto-

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ric tends to prettiness and ingenuity; the orator's effort is to attract by novelty and beauty of form, and he forgets the chief business of preaching—truth and persuasion. The great theme is lost in conceits and decorations, much as a beautiful hymn is sometimes lost in the ambitious music of the choir. The poetry is for the music, and not the music for the poetry. Just so the sermon is for the rhetoric, and not the rhetoric for the sermon.

The spirit of vainglory has been confessed and lamented by the most earnest of speakers—among them the saintly Chrysostom—how much more does it attack those who surrender themselves to ambition! The preacher's great temptation is to use rhetoric for popularity. The unbounded fame that awaits eloquence endangers the most consecrated, and many a minister has fallen into this snare of the devil. His sermon is a performance looking to sensational effect, and not a pleading with souls in behalf of God. It is no more a means of grace; the preacher no longer preaches "in demonstration of spirit and of power." His power over souls is gone; he draws crowds, but he draws them away from Christ.

That this effect was produced by the cultivation of Greek rhetoric at an early date, we have abundant evidence from Chrysostom and others.

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It was disastrous to the Church. Yet this ruinous abuse should not lead us to reject the aid of rhetoric in the pulpit, but warn us to guard against its temptations, so subtle, so captivating, so corrupting to the preacher's own spirituality, and so subversive of all the chief purposes of preaching. The moment that rhetoric ceases to be the servant of the preacher and becomes his master, the Spirit of God departs from him, and an evil spirit comes into His place to ruin the preacher and the sermon together.

General Review of the Greek Period.

The development of preaching during the Greek period, from the conversion of St. Paul down, say, to the Mohammedan invasion, is fraught with lessons to the modern pulpit. It was marked by great intellectual activity, and attained the highest pitch of eloquence. At the same time it showed a lamentable reversion to the rabbinical type. Deterioration began at an early period, and ended in the corruption of preaching. This affected the whole Church, but especially the Eastern and Egyptian sections, in which Greek culture and eloquence abounded. The preaching of the word of God is, under His Spirit, the motive power of religion and righteousness; and when it degenerates the life of the Church suffers the same decay. It was this

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degeneracy of preaching that sapped the power of Christendom, and made it an easy prey to the Moslem invader. The sudden collapse of Greek Christianity in the seventh century measures the decay of religion, and that, in turn, measures the debasement of the pulpit.

We have studied the steps and causes of the decline; we may pause a moment to gather up the pregnant lessons in a brief review.

The corruption of preaching began in a vicious system of exegesis. The word of God is essentially a *word*, and not a *cipher*. Allegorical interpretation changed the *word*, whose meaning can be precisely ascertained and tested by the laws of language, into a mystic *cipher*, which can be made to mean anything that pious fancy suggests or dogma demands. In corrupting the Bible, it poisoned preaching at its source; for preaching is nothing but the interpretation of Scripture and its application to the soul. The preacher should lay down this law as the first condition of success—to interpret Scripture according to the established laws of language; there is no other way to find God's meaning in His word, no other way to put His message into the sermon.

We have seen also how Greek controversy embittered the spirit of the preacher, while undue devotion to theology weakened his inspiration.

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These are two evils against which he must always watch and contend. They have never failed to do their deadly work whenever occasion has allowed.

The creeping back of the old rabbinical spirit of distrust and management by authority gives us another warning. Religion was never meant to be a thing of management by human ministers. It is essentially a life wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost; and His instrument is the truth. The preacher's work is done when he has found that truth in the word of God, and spoken it. After that, he must retire and leave the soul to the management of God. If he tries to dictate dogma, he will quell that spirit of inquiry which is the soul of faith, its safeguard against superstition, the teacher of progress, the adjuster of its difficulties, and the solver of its problems. He will quell it in the vast majority and reduce them to serfs of superstition, while the more heroic and gifted he will drive out of the Church, to become founders of schism or champions of infidelity. Moreover, it will affect the whole tone of his preaching; he will cease to be a persuader of men and play lord in the pulpit. This, of course, does not forbid a sober, charitable use of authority by the Church, to protect her children from unbridled extremism on the part of teachers whom *she commissions to represent her doctrine*,

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When, in the same rabbinical spirit, the preacher turns his attention away from inspiring men with the love of Christ, as if that were not the pregnant power of all righteousness, and begins to busy himself with the regulation of conduct and the enforcement of duty by discipline, he will soon find his so-called ethical preaching to be a Christless gospel, and the motive power of his sermon to have changed from love into fear.

This will turn him also from a messenger drawing his message from God by daily communion and prayer, into a priestly performer of supernatural rites. Righteousness by rites will attack the very life of preaching, vacate the preacher's office, and supersede the sermon by the functions of the priest.

Last of all, we have seen how the noble powers of rhetoric were prostituted to the uses of gain and vainglory. This abuse introduced the sophistic element of unreality into the sermon and made it sensational. It did worse for the preacher than turn him into a priest; it made him a pander to the spirit of the world for the greed of gain and the love of applause.

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CHAPTER V.

MEDIÆVAL PREACHING.

THE history of preaching brings us next into the mediæval period. The common mind regards the Middle Ages as a long reign of ignorance, superstition, violence, and ferocity. Rome is a sepulchre of the Gospel, the monastery a nursery of vice, and the pulpit a throne of priestcraft. Learned enthusiasts have rescued great deeds and great lives from its buried history, but have too often colored their report with absurdity by fond exaggeration, and discredited their restorations by reviving abandoned errors and antiquated practices. But, in truth, from the loins of this dark millennium sprung a brood of heroic preachers unsurpassed in any age for effective power in turning nations to righteousness and Christ.

While the Greek councils were yet fighting over dogma, just after "great lights had gone out in Asia" and Africa, Chrysostom and Augustine, a Scotch youth who had spent six years of slavery in the north of Ireland, and been sent

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home, heard the Macedonian call from the land of his masters. In a dream he read a letter to himself, inscribed "*The voice of the Irish,*" and as he read he thought he heard their voice sounding over the Western sea and saying, "*We entreat thee, holy youth, to come and walk among us.*" As soon as he could educate himself for the ministry, he obeyed the call, and, braving all dangers and hardships, for more than thirty years he preached the Gospel to the barbarous tribes. This was St. Patrick; and a stream of missionaries imbued with his spirit poured forth from his institutions during the succeeding century. Columba was one of them; and we all know the beautiful story of Iona, which he founded, and which, in turn, became a nursery of preachers who went forth into England, Northern France, and Germany. This was before Augustine landed in England. He brought another company of preachers to Christianize the Saxons. It would be tedious to call the roll of these missionary heroes. We but name a few more—Columbanus, who, before the time of Augustine in England, labored in Burgundy and beyond. We note also Eligius, at Noyon, in France, who stretched out thence to evangelize the fierce Frisians; Wilford and Willibrod, who spent years among them; Boniface, the apostle to the Germans in the eighth

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century; Anskar, who preached to the Danes and Swedes in the ninth century; Otho, Bishop of Bamberg, who, in the twelfth century, brought the Pomeranians out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. Last of all may be mentioned that eccentric, but brilliant and daring, missionary, Raymond Lull. One wise measure he advocated—the founding of missionary colleges for preachers to the heathen.

When we examine the preaching of these missionaries, which proved so persuasive, we find a very different style of rhetoric from that of the Greek period. The Celts and Saxons, the Franks of Clovis, the Swedes and Pomeranians would have had little appreciation of the periods of Chrysostom and the antitheses of Augustine. Indeed, their rude dialects forbade any but the simplest expressions; and the missionaries themselves, for the most part, were untrained in Greek rhetoric. The preaching had to be nearer the primitive apostolic model; simpler even, because both the apostles and their hearers had Jewish culture, at least, when they did not have Greek.

Maclear well describes the materials employed. "The teaching of the mediæval missionaries from first to last was eminently objective. It dealt mainly and simply with the great facts of Christianity; with the incarnation of the Sa-

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viour, His life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, His future coming, and then proceeded to treat of the good works that ought to flow from the vital reception of the Christian doctrine" (*Chr. Miss. Mid. Ages*, p. 424). Of course they had to argue against idols, and they did it after the fashion of Isaiah, sticking close to his line of argument. They often proved that "an idol is nothing at all in the world," as St. Paul said, in a very effectual and objective way. They would cut the idol down and chop it into firewood. After that, the heathen would have no more to say for the idol than the idol had to say for itself. A missionary in Pomerania, driven by the mob to take refuge in the temple itself, seized a sacred shield he found hanging there, and held it up before his body for protection from the missiles. To his amazement, the mob scattered and fled in all directions—he was turning their own god against them. After that it was easy work to demolish all the idols. This was preaching with object lessons.

The following is a specimen of missionary preaching from a sermon in the eighth century by Boniface on "*Faith and the Works of Love.*" It is the conclusion: "Believe also that Christ the Son of God will come at the day of judgment to judge the quick and dead . . . then the righteous shall be severed from the wicked,

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though in this world they were oppressed by them; the wicked that they may be punished with the devil in the punishment of his dungeons; the just that, in the kingdom of God, they may rejoice with Him. . . . 'All shall then arise,' as the apostle saith, 'we shall rise, but we shall not all be changed,' because the just only will be changed into glory. Then, as the Truth saith, 'The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.' 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.' There shall be life with God, without the fear of death; there unending light, and never darkness; there safety which no sickness disturbs; there unending fulness for them who now hunger and thirst after righteousness; there happiness which no fear corrupts; there joy which no sorrow consumes; there eternal glory with angels and archangels, with patriarchs and prophets, with confessors and the holy virgins who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; there are things greater and better, sweeter and more pleasant . . . which are to be given to the saints than can be spoken or thought; because, as saith the apostle, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the joys which God hath prepared for them that love Him;' to which joys may He

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bring you who hath created you" (Neale's *Med. Preachers*, pp. 26f.).

Sermon and object lesson sometimes went together in the free fashion of that preaching. Otho was consecrating a new church in Gütskow. Nobles and commoners were gathered before him. "He labored to make it plain to them," says Neander in relating the sermon, "that the highest meaning of the consecration of a church had reference to the consecration of God's temple in the soul of every believer." Turning suddenly to a new and distinguished convert, Mitzlav, governor of the district, he said: "Thou art the true house of God, my son. Thou shalt this day be consecrated and dedicated; consecrated to God, thy Almighty Creator, so that, separated from every foreign master, thou mayest be exclusively His dwelling and possession. Therefore, my beloved son, do not hinder this consecration." The governor cried out: "What must I do?" The sermon resumed. "In part thou hast begun already, my son, to be the house of God. See that thou art wholly so; for thou hast already exchanged idolatry for faith by attaining to the grace of baptism. It remains that thou shouldest adorn faith by the works of piety." He then required him to renounce the prevalent sins of the day and to obey the Golden Rule. "Set at liberty those debtors whom thou

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hast now shut up in prison." Mitzlav pleaded the great sums they owed him. But the bishop answered: "How wilt thou, then, pray 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors'?" "Well, then," said Mitzlav, deeply sighing, "I do here, in the name of the Lord Jesus, give them all their liberty." Great joy burst forth in the Church, for many had dear friends in his prison. But Mitzlav kept back one who owed him five hundred pounds of gold. Otho heard of it by accident. He sent word to the reluctant creditor that this debtor also must come out of the dungeon. At last he yielded, and said to the bishop: "I am ready to give up my person and all that I call mine for the name of my Lord Jesus Christ" (Neander, *Ch. Hist.*, Vol. VII., pp. 30f.). This was a missionary sermon preached in the middle of the twelfth century. Could a purer gospel be preached in the nineteenth?

It need not be said that this missionary preaching stuck close to Scripture. If you will read the remains of it which we possess, you will find that the words of Scripture are woven into almost every sentence, and that these words are used mainly in their true spiritual sense. This, then, is the first characteristic of that preaching. It is the scriptural word of God, and it deals with the very marrow of the Gospel. Further-

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more it makes for righteousness of life with an energy which would startle the Church to-day. The preacher, had he been sent directly from heaven, could not have been fired with a bolder zeal to attack immorality and oppression. But this zeal was not his only credential as a messenger of God. The spirit of love which inspired his labors and sacrifices, and enriched his work with measures and institutions of beneficence, like the miracles of mercy which our Lord exhibited to John's disciples as a proof of His mission, attested the missionary to these wild heathen as a messenger come from God. And the messenger was eagerly careful to adapt his message to the mind of his hearers. He translated the mind and word of Christ into the vernacular not only of their tongue but heart. We have just seen how he used the simplest speech and most striking forms of illustration. He made himself God's interpreter to them, and he spoke so earnestly from the heart that they felt that God was in his heart. They both heard the voice of God and felt His heart in the preacher's sermon.

How did this homespun backwoods preaching succeed? It made heathen Europe Christian. Teuton, Sclave, and Celt alike melted at its power. Never had preaching harder material to handle; never had it greater, more fruitful and

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permanent success. And it was the preacher who converted Europe; no doubt his sermon was backed by his life and works, but perish the sermon in every age which has not this backing! Preaching is not a mere voice in the pulpit, but a life there, thrilling through the voice. Always, it has been profoundly said, it is the man back of the sermon who makes the sermon. But we never count this out when we count the power of preaching. No doubt also the secular power aided the preacher at times by court influence and the sword, but always against his protest, we shall see, and with manifest harm to the converted nations. But still Church history witnesses that it was Patrick, Columba, and Augustine, Boniface, Eligius, Anskar, and Otho who by their preaching took possession, in the name of Christ, of those heathen hordes who stormed across the boundaries of Roman civilization, and occupied the seats of its rotten empire.

This was the power of simple, earnest, loving, Bible preaching; and it did its work at the very time when all the power of Greek rhetoric and philosophy was succumbing to the force of ambition and sacerdotalism in the pulpits of the empire. This is no argument against the benefit to the preacher of the best rhetorical culture; but it testifies to a fact that has been demonstrated over and over again that the Gospel without

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rhetoric is ten thousand times more successful than rhetoric without the Gospel. Chrysostom and Augustine amply prove the power of preaching, even in a worldly Church, when both are combined. But Greek rhetoric, as we said, had been debauched in the pulpit of classic Christendom ; it was needful, very needful, that a purer, evangelical rhetoric should spring up and be developed in the wildernesses of the North, far away from the corruptions of its civilized sister. We can almost see the hand of God in this restoration of preaching to apostolic purity before it started out on its development into the sermon for modern progress.

Barbarian Europe was Christianized ; but you must not look for a millennium. Boniface brought the millennium to Europe no more than Paul brought it to Corinth. The Church moves forward to her millennium, on earth or in heaven, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, only by the patient education of Christian sentiment, or public opinion. That it is a mighty power is coming to be a truism in politics ; it is none the less true in religion. That great composite of beliefs or settled convictions about the chief interests of the community, along with its prevalent feelings, sentiments, habits of action, tendencies and inspirations, which we call Public Opinion, which makes governments, and organizes

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society, educates the people, and sets the moral standard to business, settles creeds, and develops religion, is the most continuous, persistent, but, at the same time, the most plastic force in history. It never dies, nor abdicates, nor weakens, nor lets go one single member of the community; and yet it never ceases to change, to grow. It feels every force that strikes the community, whether it be that of other communities both friendly and hostile, or that of some internal movement which springs up from the brain of genius or the crises of events. If the preacher would Christianize a community, he must educate public opinion. It is a slow, painful, fluctuating process, for you can never arrest the momentum of public opinion; you can only change its direction by impact of new ideas and inspirations. And these changes, how they cost, how they disappoint, how they fructify only over our own grave or that of our ambitions! And yet Christian progress can only keep step with the impulse of public opinion.

Those old missionaries found, as all missionaries to the heathen find, a heathen public opinion, a body of heathen sentiments, morals, superstitions, standards, affections, which took up into itself all the life and lust of these savage peoples, and was moving with the momentum of many generations. It varied from tribe to tribe in

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outward details, but it was one in superstition, sensuality, ferocity, and ignorance—a positive ignorance made up of false ideas, and not a negative ignorance, or failure of ideas. Into this living, moving composite of heathen forces they poured the heavenly force of the Gospel. No doubt the Holy Ghost was working mightily for its success; but could it be expected that this heathen public opinion would be elevated at once into the whole mind of Christ? Has it been lifted into it yet, even in the Church of to-day? Only in the lowest sense could we say that it had been Christianized. Heathen and Christian were also bound up together in the same community, for only a few among the converted thousands were true spiritual converts, and the rest hung on them like dead weights. You can never insulate the true spiritual nucleus from the superficial community in which it is incorporated. Hence, we must not expect to see a sudden and radical change in the sentiment of these newly converted nations. Individuals may catch the spirit and reproduce the lives of the great missionaries; but public opinion, which measures—which is the true advance—registers low in the scale.

To aggravate the difficulty, the great majority of converts shifted from idolatry without real conversion, in simple loyalty to their princes or

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under the menace of the sword. We know how Clovis converted his Franks, how Charlemagne offered the alternative of sword or Bible to the heathen Saxons. A similar alternative was presented to the Pomerianians by their Polish conqueror. Alcuin and Otho both pleaded against this bloody evangel, but with little effect. It is easy to conclude what influence this forcing of the cross on these heathen nations must have had on their mind. Public opinion could be only repelled from the new religion and its ruthless doctrines.

Now, had the spirit of the primitive Church of the apostles and their earliest successors been preserved, and diffused through the Church of the empire, its leavening power would have made itself felt among these newly Christianized nations, especially in those portions of the empire in which the barbarians settled as conquerors. From these the tides of Christianized sentiment would have passed up to their more northern brethren, and the education of public opinion would have proceeded much faster. But, in truth, the public opinion of the older Church had badly degenerated under the heathen and worldly influences to which it was exposed. The primitive Church grew up under a highly cultivated but heathen civilization. It was impossible for these powerful influences not to lower

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the Christian sentiment; and we know from the preachers of those days how great was the corruption. When the northern nations descended on the empire, although they were converted to the Gospel, when their own heathen public opinion and that of the corrupted Church united their forces to form the new Christianity, the result was one St. Paul would have been grieved to own. This does not mean that Christianity had been a failure. On the contrary, the sentiment of the Roman world as a whole and that of these barbarous nations had been distinctly elevated. The little primitive Church had, indeed, dissolved out of view in this mass of converted nations, and we miss the beautiful vision of virgin Christianity; but if we multiply, so to speak, the immense mass that was raised by the degree of actual elevation, low as that is, it reveals a power at work which is enormous beyond calculation. The life of Christianity had not failed; it had simply hidden itself under the mighty populations it was lifting. Thus we have to say that the public opinion of these populations, measured from the heathen level, had made a real and priceless advance, although the sentiment of the vast Christian community was far lower than that of the little body of Christians in the days of apostles and martyrs.

At the same time, preaching suffered heavily

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from the low level of Christian public opinion—for the latter always educates the great body of preachers. Only few rise above it. After the generation of pioneers died off, their successors grew up imbued with the sentiment of the Church around them, except when the monastery formed a lesser, choicer community inside of the great community, imbued with a higher spirit; but even then the preacher gained elevation at the cost of losing touch with the masses to whom he preached. The Christian sentiment of the monastery was sure to become morbid and set up false ideals; moreover, when the morbid strain relaxed, reaction set in, and the monastery, insulated from the correction and coercion of public opinion, became more corrupt than the world itself.

Besides all this, the world-wide desolation of the barbarian irruptions from the North and the Moslem invasion from the East, swept away the schools and other institutions of learning, and a dense cloud of ignorance settled down on the Church. Homes were broken up, families scattered and sold into slavery, the tillage of the soil and the industries of business were interrupted and discouraged; the inspirations of life vanished, and a great despair paralyzed the mind and energy of the Roman world. Is it any wonder that the clergy ceased to be educated, lost

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the power of preaching, and even bishops were often unable, for very lack of learning and training, to address their flocks? In this dark, sensuous, superstitious age, the external side of religion—the pomps of ritual, the magic of perverted sacraments, the management of conscience by authority, and the relegation of religion to the priesthood—was sure to find congenial soil in people just emerging from heathen religions, in which all these things were dominant. There was less and less use for reason and persuasion, more and more use for authority and discipline; the preacher was more and more sunk in the priest; the priest multiplied and the preacher vanished away. What use for him now when religion has ceased to be a spiritual life, and become an insurance against purgatory or hell? For this the offices of the priest alone are required. Men took their consciences to the priest from time to time as we take our watches to the jeweller to have them cleaned and regulated. He would impose a penance or a fine to pay for the past; as for the future, that went on credit till the next pay-day of confession. Thus, preaching and Christian public opinion acted and reacted on each other, and both went to the bad till the result became intolerable. Something must be done, and the leaders both in State and Church were aroused to action.

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Their great effort was directed to the training of preachers. Charlemagne called Alcuin from England to aid him in the work near the end of the eighth century. During the ninth, great efforts were put forth by such men as Rabanus Maurus, and Hinckmar. "Herard, Bishop of Tours, in the year 858, directed that the priests should expound before all the faithful the doctrines of the incarnation of the Son of God, of His passion, His resurrection, and His ascension; of the effusion of the Holy Ghost and the forgiveness of sins to be obtained through the same Spirit, and of baptism into the bosom of the Church; that they should warn the people against sins, particularly sins of the grosser sort, and instruct them in the nature of the virtues" (Neander, *Ch. Hist.*, Vol. VI., p. 207). Neander notes, as a result of this revived theological culture, a reaction against the sensuous and superstitious tendency of the age.

In the thirteenth century there was another revival of preaching. Two great orders of friars were founded to supply the vast and prevalent need of preachers—the Dominicans and the Franciscans. At first they were earnest and spiritual, but success corrupted them; yet their early and wonderful success shows what preaching can do in the darkest age. Great efforts were made at this time to give rhetorical instruction in preach-

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ing. Already in the thirteenth century Alanus Magnus had written a work on the *Art of Preaching*. The abbot Guibert of Novigentum wrote on *The Right Method of Preaching*. Humbert de Romanis, general of the Dominicans, prepared for the members of his order a book entitled *De Eruditione Prædicatorum*. He lays great stress on the importance of preaching, and uses these remarkable words: "Christ celebrated the Mass but once, heard no confessions, seldom administered the sacraments, did not employ Himself much in the liturgical adoration of God; but He was constantly engaged in prayer and preaching" (Neander, *Ch. Hist.*, Vol. VIII., p. 31). Preaching in the vernacular was promoted to the utmost. In the fourteenth century Wycliffe in England and "the Friends of God," as they were called, in Germany, gave a new impulse to preaching.

Second-Hand Preaching-Helps.

The vast apparatus for second-hand preaching constructed in the Middle Ages is another evidence both of the general prostration of the pulpit and of the concern of the Church to remedy the failure. We fondly fancy that the whole apparatus of sermon helps, skeletons, prepared illustrations, and other brain-saving devices for second-hand preaching is a brilliant patent of the

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nineteenth century. The Middle Ages make us blush twice at using such apparatus, first, because they show us what kind of culture resorts to such helps, and, secondly, because their system was so superior to ours. Our demand, being confined to ignorant preachers, does not stimulate competition. The baldest and the best form of this apparatus is the *Homilarium*, which supplies a collection of fully written sermons to be read entire. The sermons of great preachers were read in the churches at a very early period. Collections of selected sermons were gradually formed, we know not how soon. They had been so long in use in the time of Charlemagne as to have become badly corrupted, and he directed a better *Homilarium* to be made about the close of the eighth century. The sermons numbered one hundred and seventy-six, and were adapted to Sundays and other festivals of the Church. Each homily began with the words "*post illa verba*," from which the name *Postil* was derived. Other *Homilaria* followed in due succession, among the best being the two *Books of Homilies* put forth, at the Reformation, by the Church of England, for the use of the multitudes of her illiterate clergy. These *Homilaria* were generally written in Latin ; it was expected that the preacher would translate them into the vernacular. Alfred the Great translated the homilies of

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Bede; other collections of translated sermons were put forth in England and Germany. These *Homilaria* were widely used during the whole mediæval period down to the Reformation. They did good, but they fostered indolence and illiteracy in the preacher; another evil was that the lazy preachers, for the most part, failed to translate the Latin homilies, and the people remained uninstructed.

But there was another class of sermon helps more like the modern. In the twelfth century, if not earlier, collections of illustrations, or *exempla*, were made for the use of preachers. They were drawn from all quarters—Roman history, romance, biography, legends, natural history, and what not. Often the *Exempla* would be indexed for easier use. In some collections, the moral or application would be drawn at the end of the story; in others, the naked *exempla* would be furnished. One or two specimens will give a better idea of these *sermon-helps*. They are taken from a collection of uncertain authorship called *Gesta Romanorum*, which probably dates back to the twelfth or thirteenth century. The first is entitled *Of the Conquests and Charity of our Lord*. It says that in a war between Cosdras, the Athenian king, and the Dorians the Delphic oracle declared he should not win the battle unless he himself fell by the sword of the

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enemy. The Dorians, knowing this, gave orders that he should by no means be slain. But Cosdras disguised himself, cut his way into their centre, and was pierced to the heart by a lance. "Thus," says the *Exemplum*, "by the sacrifice of his own life he rescued his people from the hand of their enemies, and his death was bewailed not less by the adverse host than by his own subjects." This is the application added, and a very good one it is: "My beloved, thus did our blessed Lord, by the predetermined counsel of God, die to liberate mankind from their worst enemies. As Cosdras changed his regal state for the humilating garb of a servant, so did Christ put on mortality, and by His death triumphed over our demoniacal foes." The second treats of the soul's wounds in a story about Alexander the Great. In a certain siege many soldiers were slain without showing any visible sign of a wound. On making inquiry, he got this reply: "On the walls of the city is a basilisk whose look infects your soldiers, and they die of the pestilence it creates." "And what remedy is there for this?" said the king. "Place a mirror high up between the army and the wall; no sooner shall he behold it than his own reflection shall kill him." And so it was done. The application says: "My beloved, look into the glass of reflection, and, by remembrance of hu-

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man frailty, destroy the vices which time elicits." These are short specimens; many are quite lengthy; and there is a book full of these *exempla!*

Cardinal Jacques de Vitry made another collection of *Exempla* in the thirteenth century. There were still others, and, after the invention of printing, such collections were multiplied and came into enormous use. Natural history was often moralized. Every chapter of *De Naturis Rerum*, issued about 1240, begins with a bee moral; in another the ant takes the place of the bee. What a *treasure trove* one of these collections would be for a Sunday-school teacher or preacher—except for the Latin!

Outline sermons also were published. One set by Gritsch covered a whole year, and made extensive use of Ovid's *Metamorphoses.* In 1325 a Dominican of Italy edited a kind of *Preacher's Encyclopædia;* to crown all, John of Worden, in the middle of the fifteenth century, put forth a set innocently called *Sermones Dormi Secure* (*Sleep-easy Sermons*), because, as explained in the introduction, "the preacher could make sermons out of them so handily that he could sleep easily on Saturday night." Is this the object of "sermon-helps" to-day? Certainly it is "sleep easy" to the brain of the preacher who uses them, if not to the conscience of his hearers.

And this is the folly of the whole sleep-easy

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system of second-hand preaching—it paralyzes the brain and heart. Living power comes only by the wrestling of brain and heart. The materials of reading and observation must be taken up into the processes of the mind and born again into our own offspring by the travail of thinking. It is this working over of ideas that makes them our own, and quickens the imagination till they start out in new forms, and kindle the affections, and vitalize the will. It is true of the humblest intellect as well as of the most soaring genius. Live thought makes new thought, "ready-made" thought stales in the very act of telling. You cannot give it to others, for it was never your own. Even the actor must re-live his character before he can act it to the life.

Nor does it mend matters to say that only the outline is given. What is a true outline, or working plan of a sermon, but a calculation and setting of all its forces? It is here that a true preacher enters into the power of his subject and the heart of his hearers. Here he measures its forces and their needs. Let this be done in a true and living way, and the very quickening of his imagination which comes from intent realization of all these things will give creative power to fill up the outline with living details, and utter them in burning words. But your sleep-easy sermon help—you begin dead and you end dead.

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These things may do for beginners as exercises; sermon-helps make a fairly good homiletical go-cart for babies to learn to walk in. But "when we become men we must put away childish things." We need only suggest the ethical side of the question. Who makes the sermon? Not the material, for the more of that we get from others the richer will be our own thinking; but who does the planning? Whose net catches the fine, flying illustrations, the apt verses, the moving incidents? Will you say that the second-hand preacher puts the words on? Yes, such rags and tinsel and "purple patches" of language as mark the sermon for his own. Away with this sneak-preaching, and let us get our message from God! As old Matthias of Janow said five hundred years ago of the second-hand preachers of his day: "They boldly stand forth as teachers because they possess perhaps a certain gift of elocution; and they provide themselves with collections of sermons, postils for every day in the year, and so, without any further search into Scriptures, they hold forth these current homilies, preaching with great ostentation. They are people who know nothing about the Bible. Such persons do not preach from devotion and from joy in God's word, nor from zeal to edify the people, but because this is the business assigned to them, or because they are

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fond of making a display of their skill in speaking, or because they are hunting after popularity, and find gratification in being favored and honored by the people. So they have recourse to their collections of sermons, or put together fine words and furnish out their discourses with fine stories'' (Neander, Vol. IX., p. 265). Shall we copy the fourteenth century?

Failure of Bible-Preaching.

This whole apparatus testifies, as we said at the beginning, to the failure of preaching. The greatness of the evil forced a remedy, and the remedy was "sermon-helps." In one sense it gave relief, for it made preaching easy; but in a deeper sense it aggravated the evil, because it still further enervated the preacher as a student and thinker, and it superseded the need of his getting his message by a prayerful study of God's word. Why should he seek a message from God and the Bible? Was not the *Homilarium* or *Book of Exempla* at his hand? This brings us to the great defect of mediæval preaching, its neglect of the Bible. There only can the word of God be found in its purest form; its devout study alone will give us the mind of God, reveal His timely message, and inspire the preacher with zeal to promote godly living. And yet it seems

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as if the world and the Church had combined to put the Bible out of the pulpit, or, at least, to banish its true meaning by fantastic interpretation. It is true that a splendid line of Bible preachers marks a shining track across the darkness, but we speak now of the prevalent type of preaching. A number of powerful causes combined to thrust the Bible into the background. They are worth our study, for they abound in lessons to the preacher.

1. The general ignorance and want of intellectual activity has already been alluded to; we have considered the causes, and need only add that the darkness seemed to increase as feudal raids, national wars, and the crusades absorbed the energies of men, desolated the land, and drove the student into the monastery. In these monasteries there kindled a little taper of intellectual and spiritual life, but it only emphasized the outer darkness, and itself well-nigh suffered extinction from the corruption of morals and indolence engendered by monastic life. The priest found also that the liturgical service, with its sensuous pomp of ritual, cost no mental effort, and satisfied the dull religious cravings of his ignorant flock. He could shine at the altar; his ignorance pilloried itself in the pulpit. He was not long in choosing, especially seeing that he could save himself both shame and learning at

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the altar, and his people also could save their consciences by taking a sacrament in place of a sermon. It is a temptation not unknown to modern mediævalism, and the cry has gone out in our day from the altar against the drudgery of the pulpit. Preaching does cost drudgery, hard study of the Bible, learning, prayer, and divine inspiration; but the history of the pulpit in the Middle Ages serves us pregnant warning against substituting a liturgical service—although of priceless value—in place of Bible study and preaching.

2. The sermon helps which we have just been considering were another cause of departure from the Bible. These *exempla* were drawn from every source but Scripture; and while they were used to illustrate Bible truth, they dropped the Bible itself from the sermon and opened the door to fancy and superstition.

3. The lives of the saints, and especially that of the Virgin Mary, began to prevail as topics of preaching and supersede the Bible. Hardwick, speaking of this interference, says: "A more fascinating species of instruction was supplied in the *Lives of the Saints*. The number of these works surviving at the present day is actually prodigious; and the influence they exercised on the mediæval mind was deep and universal" (*Mid. Ages*, p. 97). Special veneration was

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given to Mary, the mother of our Lord. An archbishop of Genoa published in 1298 "one hundred and sixty panegyrics on Mary, in which her perfections were alphabetically arranged and celebrated with no little pathos." An Italian preacher early in the sixteenth century delivered sixty discourses in her honor (Van Ooster, p. 106ff.).

4. A hierarchical opposition to translations of Scripture into the vernacular, and to lay study of the Bible developed early in the thirteenth century, because Bible reading by laymen had exposed the vices and pretensions of the priesthood, and had led to the formation of sects in France. Innocent III., originally in favor of it, was rendered hostile by discovering that it opposed the claims of the hierarchy. In 1229 a synod at Toulouse prohibited the vernacular translation of the Bible or its reading by laymen (Neander, *Ch. Hist.*, Vol. VIII., p. 39ff.). In the fourteenth century, Wycliffe was persecuted for translating the Bible into English. This hostility kept growing. Such a policy on the part of the Pope and hierarchy could not but tend to bring Bible preaching into disrepute.

5. Scholasticism also exercised an unfavorable influence. Its aim was to harmonize Aristotelian philosophy and Church dogma, and to establish the latter by aid of the former. This tended to

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force Scripture into the background. Systems of dogma derived from the Fathers and philosophy, called *Summas*, or Summaries, came into use. They began with Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, and after that every great schoolman had to write his *Summa*. These also pushed the Bible to one side. Roger Bacon, already in the thirteenth century, lamented that "the study of the Bible was so much neglected by the theologians, and, compared with the study of the new dialectic theology, thrown wholly into the background, that any man who, at Paris or Bologna, would give lectures on the Bible must, in respect to time and place, give way to him who would read on the *Sentences*. . . . In other faculties the text always went for more than the commentary, but it was just the opposite in theology; and yet the text in theology was infinitely higher than in any of the other faculties" (*Ibid.*, pp. 179, 180). The schoolmen often wrested Scripture in order to force it into harmony with Aristotle. Gregory IX., in 1228, warned the University of Paris against "the presumptuous and false use of philosophy in matters of faith. He complained," says Neander, "probably not without reason, of the forced interpretations whereby it was attempted to bring the declarations of Holy Scripture into harmony with the doctrines of such philosophers as had never known the true

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God" (*Ibid.*, p. 169). Melanchthon tells us that sometimes Aristotle's *Ethics* were read in the churches.

6. Mysticism, the second great movement of the Middle Ages, had its own reasons, too, for thrusting the Bible to one side. It is prone to be wilful, to depend on visions and intuitions and "the inner light," to despise all written or formulated standards which offer to regulate its extravagances. Hence it treats Scripture loftily when it ventures to differ from the "inner light." This is not true of all mystics. St. Bernard was the father of mediæval mysticism, and he was inspired, by aversion to the subtleties and unpractical discussions of the schoolmen, to turn back to the religion of the heart, to the inner manifestations and guidance of the Paraclete. Tauler, the great mystic teacher of the fourteenth century, and Ruysbroch were free from mystic wilfulness. But many overrode Scripture without scruple whenever their visions and fantasies ran counter to its teachings. Professor A. Seth (under "Mysticism" in *Encyc. Brit.*) tells us: "When the reformers appeared to do their work, the mystics were found opposing the new authority of Scripture as bitterly as they had opposed the old authority of the Church. To the thoroughgoing mystic individualist the one standard is as external as the other."

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7. Allegorical interpretation lent its ready aid to scholastic, mystic, and fantastic, and often all three were combined in one. Its facile finger moulded Scripture to fit philosophy or quicken mystic fancy. Farrar gives amusing illustrations. The Gospel says of John the Baptist, "his meat was locusts and wild honey;" but Aquinas says, by way of interpretation, "John ate locusts and wild honey because his preaching was to the crowds sweet like honey, but short of flight like the locusts." Mysticism and scholasticism ran riot hand in hand in the saintly Bonaventura. "The four rivers that parted in Paradise signified the fourfold interpretation of Scriptures—namely, of histories, of anagoges, of allegories, and of tropologies." Hugo of St. Victor, near Paris, which was the centre of mediæval mysticism, esteemed "the literal sense of Scripture so worthless that he compares it to mud used to anoint the eyes of the blind" (*Hist. Interpretation*, p. 255).

8. The *Renaissance* in Italy during the fourteenth century kindled a passion for the classics which brought the Bible and religion itself into contempt. The head of the Church, the Pope, turned pagan, and Leo X. expressed the spirit of the hierarchy there at the centre of all authority in the Church by declaring wittily, "*How much we owe to that fable of Christ!*" If this was

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the feeling at Rome, how much veneration for the Bible shall we expect from the priesthood at large?

These are among the chief causes that produced "a famine of the word of God" during this dark period. It was this famine that made the Dark Ages. The "people perished for lack of knowledge." For centuries kings and popes themselves labored and prayed for "a reformation of the Church in its head and members." One Pope laid down his life for the cause. Council after council was held to find a way of reform. Reformation was impossible till the Bible was put back into the pulpit. The Bible was the remedy, the only one; and, when it came to the front again, the shadows of the Dark Ages began to flee away. The reformers and their children put it back into the pulpit; when the preacher dares to banish it again, the Dark Ages will return, and the preacher must go.

We have already noted that the deadly system of management by authority, or sacerdotalism, which originated at an early period, had greatly developed before the ninth century. During the period of the schoolmen its grip only tightened. Many a hard battle was fought over dogma; the names of Gottschalk, Berengarius, and Abelard are battle notes ringing in the dark. But the fate of all taught reason a lesson of obedience to

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authority which stopped the spirit of free inquiry and the inspiration of nascent thought for several centuries. The pulpit was quick to feel the check ; but it suffered still more from the management of religion and morals by the same authority. As if the present world were not dreadful enough in the desolations and tyrannies which it suffered, the morbid genius of the hierarchy discovered a purgatory in the next, whose horrors—pictured so vividly by Dante, "the man who had seen hell"—awaited the unhappy Christian between the abyss of death and the gates of heaven. It was a profitable purgatory for the priest, for he kept its keys on the heavenly side, and he alone could liberate the tormented pilgrim into Paradise. What was repentance without the priest? Formerly his discipline kept the fallen out of church ; now his sentence excludes from heaven. Repentance must perfect itself, not by deeper devotion to Christ, but by paying penalty to God. What has the preacher to do with the whole transaction? The priest appoints the penance to expiate the sin, or at least so much of it as can be expiated here ; the surplus remains to be expiated in purgatory. Oh, that nightmare of purgatory! Was there no relief? Yes, the relief of indulgences. In the bishop's hands at first, and afterward in the hands of the Pope, was lodged a power to remit the pains of

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purgatory. First, a pilgrimage to some shrine, especially to the city of the cross, was made the consideration; then to serve in a crusade; at last it got down to shekels—Judas shekels that bought and sold the Lord again.

A new herd of preachers went ranting through Europe that shamed the old. Their argument was purgatory, their salvation was indulgences. Protest after protest was made. That mighty preacher, Berthold of Regensburg, declaimed against them. He called them "penny preachers, who discourse so finely before the people concerning God, in order that they may strip them of their money. . . . Fie on thee, penny preacher, murderer of the whole world! . . Thou promisest a large indulgence for a penny or a farthing, so that many thousands foolishly imagine they have expiated all their sins with their penny or their farthing, as thou snufflest out to them. So they leave off confessing themselves, and thus go on to perdition with none to tell them better" (Neander, *Ch. Hist.*, Vol. VIII., p. 81). It was yet three long centuries down to Tetzel and Luther! Is it any wonder that preaching decayed during this long reign of the priest and his indulgences? As we have already said, what was the use of the preacher when salvation depended, not on those spiritual efforts to which he exhorted men, but on priest, penances, and pardons?

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And yet there were preachers, "there were giants in those days," a long line of them from Beda down to Luther, worthy to march in that line of missionary heroes of whom we have already spoken. They were preachers full of Christ and full of His word. Hear how Bede himself comforted English Christians on All Saints' Day, twelve hundred years ago: "Above all things is it to be associated with the companies of angels and archangels . . . to behold the squadrons of saints adorned with stars, the apostles who shall judge the whole world, the martyrs decked with purple diadems of beauty. . . . But of the king in the midst no words are able to speak. That beauty, that virtue, that glory, that magnificence, that majesty surpasses every expression. For it is greater than all the glory of all the saints but to attain to that ineffable sight. . . . It were worth while to suffer torments every day—as it were worth while to endure hell itself for a season—so that we might behold Christ coming in glory, and be joined to the number of the saints. Is it not, then, well worth while to endure earthly sorrows that we may be partakers of such good, and of such glory?" (Neale, *Med. Pr.*, p. 6).

There was Alcuin, the English monk, who was called by Charlemagne to lay the foundations of learning in his barbarian empire; there was

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Rabanus Maurus, who did so much for the cause of preaching, notwithstanding his harsh treatment of poor Gottschalk. Peter Damiani was a mighty preacher in Italy in the eleventh century, in the same age when Anselm used to stoop down from the lofty heights of theology to teach the Gospel to plain unlettered peasants, just as Aquinas did two centuries later. One great name fills the twelfth century—Bernard, the saint of Clairvaux. It is impossible to describe the impression which this man produced on his generation; princes, kings, and popes bowed to his sway. Multitudes melted at his preaching. One of his most affecting sermons is that which he preached at the death of his brother Gerard, whom he had years before persuaded to leave his wife and children and enter the monastery. How even that lofty soul was enslaved by the sentiment of his age! Thus he bewails his loss: "I groan as one that hath no help. Whom shall I consult in doubtful matters? Who will bear my burdens? Who will protect me from harm? Did not Gerard's eyes prevent my steps? Alas! my cares entered more deeply into Gerard's breast than into my own. His wise and gentle speech saved me from secular conversation and gave me the silence which I loved. Scarcely any one needed me who had previously seen Gerard. He hastened to meet the visitors lest

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they should disturb my leisure. . . . Thou wast oppressed with business while I sat enjoying my holiday, or spent my time more devoutly in the worship of God, or more usefully in teaching my spiritual sons. How could I fail to be peaceful within when I knew that thou wast abroad acting the part of my right hand, my heart, my tongue? . . . How often in discussion with him have I learned things that I never knew before; and I who came to teach went away taught! . . . He had the illumination of the Spirit, and not only in the greatest things, but also in the least was he surpassing great. . . . Alas! thou art gone; with thee all my delights and joys have flown away. . . . I was slain when he was cut off. The portals of life to him were death to me; and I should say that I died with that death, not he who fell asleep in the Lord." Thus the great heart broke at his brother's grave.

Other great preachers lived in his age—Guaric of Igniac, his intimate friend; Hugo of St. Victor, the great mystic; Peter of Chartres, and, a little after, Peter of Blois. Then we strike the famous names of the thirteenth century—a brood of Titans—Antony of Padua. "When he preached," says Neale, "the church was thronged from daybreak; shops were closed, thoroughfares deserted. The crowds were some-

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times calculated at thirty thousand. Nor was the practical effect less striking. Italian hatreds were reconciled, the stiletto cast away, women selling their ornaments to aid the poor, old hardened sinners brought immediately to confession." Unfortunately we have little more than the headings of his sermons left us. Dominic and Francis of Assisi march before us leading their two great orders of preachers. Then come the three great schoolmen, Bonaventura, Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas; their matchless learning did not make them scorn to be humble but effective preachers of the Gospel. Peer to Antony was the eloquent Franciscan Berthold of Regensburg, whose denunciations of the penny preachers of indulgences we have just quoted. Neander says: "No church was large enough to hold the multitudes. Often a pulpit would be erected in the open fields, and he would preach to an assembly of sixty thousand people. He fearlessly rebuked the vices of all ranks of society. Many were converted and confessed their sins. Women of immodest habits immediately abandoned their dishonest calling."

In the next century we have the celebrated mystic Tauler. The story of his illumination with the higher mystic life is pathetic; his first sermon after the mystic change, on the text, "*Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,*" has a wist-

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ful tone that moves the deepest yearnings. He is telling of the successive steps of sacrifice which the Bride must take to meet her Lord. He says: "When the Bridegroom seeth this entire and faithful will in the Bride, and her deep and thorough humility, what does He do then? His heart yearns over the Bride, and He giveth her a very costly, noble, and sweet cup to drink. What is this cup? It is that she suffers yet far more from all manner of temptations and tribulation than she has ever suffered before. And she suffers all these things gladly for the Bridegroom's sake, and boweth herself down humbly before Him and saith, 'Ah, dear Lord and Bridegroom, it is right that Thou shouldest not will as I will. I receive this gift right willingly and gladly for Thy love from Thy divine hand.' Now, when the Bridegroom perceives this disposition in His humble Bride, she begins to grow precious to Him, and from hearty love He giveth her to suffer in all her nature, till the Bride is wholly purified from all faults and stain of sin, and becomes perfectly fair and unspotted. Then He says, 'Now rise up, my beloved, my pleasant, my beautiful Bride, for thou art pure, without spot, and altogether lovely in my eyes.' Then cometh the Father of the Eternal Bridegroom, and saith to the Bride, 'Rise up, my beloved; it is time to go to church;' and He

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taketh the Bridegroom and the Bride and leadeth them to the church, and marrieth them to each other. . . . And when, in these divine espousals, they have been made one, the Bridegroom saith, 'O beloved and eternal Father, what shall be our wedding gift?' And the Father saith, 'The Holy Ghost.' And He sheds forth on the Bride the torrent of divine love, and this love flows out unto the Bridegroom, insomuch that the Bride loseth herself and is intoxicated with love, so that she forgets herself and all creatures in time or eternity, together with herself."

Wycliffe walks close behind the mystic, bearing an open Bible in his hands, from which he preaches to the people, while pope and priest follow him like bloodhounds. Chancellor John Gerson and À Kempis cross the boundary of the fifteenth century, sharing between them the spirit, if not the authorship, of that saintly oracle, "*The Imitation of Christ.*" A pair of martyr preachers walk abreast of them—John Huss and Jerome of Prague. We close the line with the master and martyr of Florence, Fra Girolamo Savonarola. What a tragedy his life!—a poor monk, a failure at his first preaching; a hesitating prophet stammering out his oracle of doom, "Italy shall be scourged, the Church shall be renovated; all this very soon, in our time;" contending on

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equal terms with the Medici till they are expelled, dictating government to Florence, pleading, prophesying, thundering in the Duomo, lighting the holocaust of "*the vanities*" in the Piazza della Signoria; then brought to bay, deserted, dragged to trial, shrinking from the fiery ordeal, tortured, wavering for a moment, rallying, marching to the gallows, giving his soul to God and his work to history—where will you find a match to this figure?

He had little rhetorical culture, a bad voice, and, at first, inarticulate expression; but he knew the Bible, and sought his message in its oracles, however he marred them by his strange mediæval exegesis. Most of all, he loved his people and believed in his divine mission. The effect of his preaching both on himself and his hearers was wonderful. He soared into ecstasy and electrified men as with sudden shocks. Once when he preached on the Deluge, as he ascended the pulpit, the people saw that he was laboring under the strongest emotion. "Gazing across them, he gave out his text, '*Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth.*' The words and the tone struck terror into every heart. Pico della Mirandola, who was present, relates that a shudder ran through his whole frame, and his hair seemed to stand on end; and Savonarola declares that he himself was not less moved than

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his hearers." It was a great occasion, and a great audience, but it also takes a great man to match and master things that are great. Savonarola demonstrates that great *moral* power counts for more than any other power in eloquence. It was not his Bible learning, nor his rhetoric, nor his logic, but the vehement attack of his eager and indomitable will on the heart of his hearers that mastered them and swayed them to his purpose.

In this line of preachers we easily note the great fundamentals of preaching. They drew their message from the Bible in an age when the Bible was universally neglected; their ideal of godly living was somewhat affected by the errors of their age, but, in the main, it was true and lofty; they were inspired with the deepest sense of having a mission from God; and they took the greatest pains to adapt their preaching to the mind of their hearers. These things are open on the surface.

Mysticism and Scholasticism.

Two great movements developed in the Middle Ages, especially after the tenth century—Mysticism and Scholasticism. From these two sources the sermon received its chief mediæval contributions, Mysticism giving it material and inspiration, and Scholasticism imparting to it a

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new form and method as well as materials. We need to study these movements.

Mysticism.

The mystic treads on holy ground; he turns aside from the world to see the burning bush; he enters the tabernacle of tryst between God and man; he lifts the awful veil. Mysticism means, as we have already seen, direct personal converse with God; in the body, and, therefore, now—it does not wait for heaven; in the spirit, and, therefore, without language or vision, but none the less sure. This is true mysticism; and it enshrines the innermost truth of religion, the manifest, vitalizing presence of God, the mutual embrace of the soul and its divine Father. Without it religion is impossible; with it the divine life is sure. And yet this divinest truth is the most dangerous, for it is beset by the subtlest and most perilous snares. False mysticism clings to the true, and often wears the more angelic robes. True mysticism furnishes the preacher with his divinest material and inspiration; false mysticism makes him the unwitting pander of the devil, intoxicated with delusions, and debauching the flock in the highest faculties of the soul.

So deadly is the danger, and so prevalent the perversion, that many among the most thought-

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ful and earnest of Christians, men that ought by teaching and practice to draw God's people to the tryst of true worship, are set against the best exercises of the spiritual life, and pronounce religion to be a life of holy motive and action, conducted by intelligent conscience as a guide to a far future vision of God in heaven. And yet their own divine life is fed by a constant clinging to the divine presence, and a persevering, but partial and half-conscious use of the very exercises they deprecate. By this misapprehension they cut themselves off with their followers from the highest culture and inspiration.

Mysticism, we say, means direct, conscious converse with God, not by processes of reason or inference from answers to prayer, but by direct address on both sides. The means are two, *meditation* and *holiness*. *Meditation* signifies not merely thinking about God, His nature and dealings, although it includes this as the source of a right conception of Him, as a similar knowledge of a friend enters into our sentiment as we talk with him; it also furnishes materials for our converse. But, over and above all this, mystic meditation means direct address to God, thinking out our thoughts to Him, feeling out our feelings to Him. Without this actual address, how could we commune with God? It reciprocates His address to us, and renders it possible.

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But *holiness* also is required of them that draw nigh to God. Holiness means a setting apart of ourselves, our self-devotion, to God. This devotion works within to cleanse from every impurity that offends Him. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Devotion also works without to do God's work in service to our fellow-men, His children. Devotion to Christ is realized in ministry to His brethren, and is to be the final ground of our admission into His kingdom and fellowship.

1. Now, it is regard for this second condition of divine communion which begins to divide true mysticism from false. Disregard for holiness vitiated and ruined mysticism in the East, and Christian mysticism in the Thebaid. Even when purity was regarded, ministry to man was neglected by the recluse. Regard to this service saved the monkish mysticism of mediæval Europe. All the monasteries were founded to cultivate the mystic life, indeed, but the original monks busied themselves in missionary and other ministries.

2. A second difference is in the treatment of the world. Both kinds of mysticism find the world full of evil and temptation; the false calls it wholly bad, spurns it altogether, shuts it out, and flees to the desert or monkish cell. This breaks the second great commandment of Christ, to love our brother, deprives the world of our

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ministry, makes the mystic lose sympathy by losing touch with men; he becomes unpractical and visionary in his religious views, and robs his conscience of the corrective influences of Christian public opinion; and then, in turn, prurient imagination avenges the world which has been banished from the body by filling the mind with its tantalizing presence. But the true mystic remembers that God created the world all very good, gave us its milk and honey for our use, established our home in its midst, made it the arena of our ministry to men, and appointed fellowship with them to be the culture of that love which is the fulfilling of the law. He finds the world his post of duty, and when he learns that it is full of evil, he recalls his Lord's petition: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil;" he also prays to be kept from the evil, and stands at his post to battle with the world. In that conflict he finds the exercise of every virtue; he has patience as he suffers, trusting that when patience shall have had "her perfect work, he shall be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Sometimes he will withdraw himself from the pleasures and distractions of the world in order to give himself up to special meditation; he will love to do so in company with the Church in her concerted revival sea-

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sons; but still only for a space; meantime he does not forget his duty in the world, for he is the salt of God to season its life.

3. A third difference is in the treatment of the body. It is like the last difference. The false mystic would annihilate the body as if it were his greatest enemy. He is not without a purgatorial thought also of expiating his sins by its punishment here. The body avenges itself on the mind by all the torments of dyspepsia, doubles temptation, sours inspiration, while prurient imagination, again, excites the very desires that were scourged away. The true mystic finds in the body God's handiwork, an organ fearfully and wonderfully made for fellowship with our brethren and service to Him, an instrument to be kindly cared for and controlled in temperance; he also sees in it the symbol, if not the seed, of that glorious body to be given him at the resurrection by Christ; and he relishes the sober pleasure which it furnishes him here as a foretaste of his joys in the heavenly body. He has learned from the experience of all saints that, in seasons devoted to meditation, a moderate reduction of its animal vitality by fasting and vigil, has a power to clear the intellect, exalt the imagination, and emancipate the spirit. He uses this means without excess, for he has also learned from history how false mysticism has mortified

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the body by austerities only to pamper the imagination into a riot of visions, and enslave the soul with a passion for ecstasy.

4. A fourth difference is that between the true and the false sense of God's presence, and the corresponding effect upon the soul. The meditation of the true mystic is an energetic activity of the mind, sometimes rising into wrestling; it induces a sense of the divine presence; God becomes very real; faith is animated with new vigor, if not joy; comforting views of God are bestowed; and sometimes the spirit soars into ecstasy. St. Paul describes a ravishing revelation which he once enjoyed. But even ecstasy, in true mysticism, is rational and collected. David Brainerd, the inspiration of modern missions in the last century, thus describes his own experience in a true mystical ecstasy: "Unspeakable glory seemed to open to the apprehension of the soul. I do not mean any external brightness, for I saw no such thing; nor do I intend any imagination of a body of light somewhere in the third heavens, or anything of that nature; but it was a new inward apprehension or view that I had of God such as I never had before, nor anything that had the least resemblance of it. I stood still, wondered, and admired. I knew that I had never seen before anything comparable to it for excellency and

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beauty; it was widely different from all the conceptions that ever I had of God or things divine. . . . I continued till near dark in this state of inward joy, peace, and astonishment, without any sensible abatement; and then began to think and examine what I had seen; and felt sweetly composed in my mind all the evening following."

These manifestations of God, in high or low degree, are the inspiration of religion; but the true mystic does not allow his imagination to be enslaved by them. He does not abandon his prayer if God tarries before drawing the veil. He nerves his faith to work under the cloud; he perseveres in duty though he walk in darkness. He learns also that high emotional frames excite the whole system, and are apt to leave us a prey to temper, sensuality, and other sins, unless we guard ourselves with redoubled care. Is it irreverential to say that it is but one step from God's presence to the devil's? St. Paul had to be chastened sorely after his ecstasy lest he should be exalted above measure; and our Lord Himself went out to be tempted of the devil just after that opening of heaven which sent down upon Him the holy Dove and the voice of God.

But the false mystic abhors exertion of the mind; his meditation is wholly passive, a luxurious revery; his life is one long revery inspired

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by a passion for the delights of ecstasy. He is a pleasure-seeker on the heights of religion. He has denied himself all other gratifications for sake of this, has poured all the passions of his soul into this one channel; he lies before the imaginary presence of God expecting it to paint its beauty on his heart as the sunset paints its glories on the level lake. A great French philosopher has thus described the result: "Abandon yourself for a time to this passive state of the intellect; give yourself up to all ideas and images which come confusedly and pass away; and soon you will feel your mind become clouded and perplexed amid this ever-fluctuating series of impressions; a stupefaction and delirium in which truth and error, illusion and reality can no longer be distinguished, will come over you. . . . From the state of contemplation to revery, hallucination, and delirium is but a step; this step all mystics boldly took. . . . It was a principal doctrine of mysticism that the human mind could, through contemplation, arrive at views of truth and actual being, which it was quite incapable of in its ordinary condition, and could thus hold communications with the future, with unseen spirits, with God Himself. . . . Mysticism ended necessarily in substituting the visions of revery for science, as it had first substituted contemplation for attention in its

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mode of operation" (Jouffroy's *Ethics*, Vol. I., p. 134f.)

5. Still another difference between true mysticism and false is found in the relation of the intellect to feeling. The false mystic, lapped in the languor of revery, flushed with feeling, gazing at divine visions as at passing clouds of crimson, scorns the exercise of reason. Why should he define what owes its beauty to its vagueness? He is a foe to the sharp definitions of theology and ethics; he prefers the most fanciful interpretations of Scripture; he loves to leave morals and conduct to the guidance of impulse; his last dream is his present creed, and his freshest desire the *dictum* of duty. Hence false mysticism is ever pregnant with immorality and licentiousness, and has strewn her filthy spawn along the whole current of history.

But the true mystic, entering the real presence of God, and not the *adytum* of hallucination, is aroused to the most searching scrutiny of his heart. An overwhelming sense of unworthiness makes him cry out: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" Here, where no secrets and sophistries avail, conscience learns her truest casuistry. The ethic which is learned in this wrestling with duty before the eyes of God abides, for it is "taught of God." We learn what bars us out from Him. So also the

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spirit here explores, by divine illumination, all the experiences of life and the problems of doubt, fitting to them with equal study the teachings of revelation. God the Spirit brings together here life and the Bible, and the mystic studies their divine correlation. Both are one here. Thus it is that mysticism has taught the Church all her experimental theology, and in its stores the preacher finds his richest spiritual materials.

There has always been true mysticism in the Church, and it has always been followed closely by its counterfeit. In Clement of Alexandria, in Ephrem Syrus, chiefly in Augustine, we find its working. But, as Professor Seth explains, "neither the Jewish mind nor the Greek lent itself readily to mysticism." The Jew was too legal and matter of fact; the world was too beautiful and delightful to the Greek. The mystical side of religion found its largest development in the Middle Ages. It came in with the Neo-Platonism of the Pseudo-Dionysius, in the ninth century, through the speculations of Erigena; the deepening horrors of the world, driving men for refuge and religion into the monastery, fostered its growth; but it received its greatest impulse from Bernard of Clairvaux, as a reaction of heart-religion from the logic of the schoolmen. It flowered in Tauler and the "Friends of God;" it helped to prepare the

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way for the Reformation. It enriched the Church with her finest spiritual lore; it glows in that never-fading story of the soul, the *Imitation of Christ;* it lights the track of *Pilgrim's Progress.* It gave an impulse to spiritual study, and a passion for fellowship with God, which preaching never has forgotten; the inspiration of the Puritans, of Methodism, and of the Oxford movement was from the same spiritual source; the last of our great preachers, Phillips Brooks, kindles with the same divine warmth in every sermon. The preacher cannot do without true mysticism and its teachings; he owes them largely to the mediæval mystic; and, if false mysticism intruded and tainted even the finest spirits of those ages, its influence has passed away, and the true mysticism abides.

Scholasticism.

Mediæval mysticism enriched the sermon greatly; an equal contribution was made by the schoolmen. It is the smartness of little wit to wax witty over their hair-splitting and fantastic subtleties. "How many angels can dance together on the point of a needle?" and other like questions disputed in mediæval dialectics seem to represent scholasticism to the popular mind. Indeed, these extravagances were the waste and

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not the work of the schoolmen ; and you might as well judge a sculptor by the marble litter on his floor instead of the finished statue on the pedestal, as to judge the mediæval masters by these freaks and fantasies of humor or infirmity. I confess my soul bows in homage when I ponder any great movement of the human mind, especially when it is led by lofty, reverent intellects, animated by aims sublime, and carried forward by enthusiastic industry and thought through many ages. Under the persistent current, I see God moving in human history, and I expect to find, in spite of human blundering, results worthy of man's long toil, and such inspiration from on high. What loftier intellects than Erigena, Anselm, and Aquinas ? What acuter genius than that of Peter Abelard and Dun Scotus ? Poor Abelard ! Could his selfish ambition and Byronic meanness have been transmuted by the measureless passion of Heloise, could he but have appropriated her heroism of love when he rifled her honor, and aggrandized himself by her measureless sacrifices, he would not only have given a new movement to thought, but he would have left, like his saintly antagonist Bernard, a name of inspiration to the Christian heart ! It is a tragedy of love fit to break the heart of Pity—love and pain poured out like water, while yon fallen archangel creeps off to his penitential clois-

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ter, there to learn repentance by bitter humiliation, and die at last, by God's mercy, in peace.

There were mighty minds moving under those mediæval shadows, and they were striving for noble ends. We must realize the reverence with which they clung to the past; they could allow no break in the historic continuity of religion. What Irenæus and Cyprian believed in the days of the martyrs must still be true. Athanasius and Nazianzen could not have blundered when they battled with Arius. Basil and Chrysostom were masters worthy of obedience. Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine, who could turn aside from their path? Leo, Gregory, and Damascenus, surely the Church might follow them. The saintly lives that illustrated the line of Christian achievement back to Christ could not have been the result of false doctrine. That doctrine, for their uncritical minds, was found in the traditions of the Roman Church. Under the management of that Church all their knowledge of the Christian religion had come to them. How could the Roman doctrine and discipline be wrong? This, then, was their first and sacred task, to defend Scripture and philosophy, the Roman dogma and the whole body of traditions. It meant for them simply defending religion. To this sacred duty the schoolmen devoted their lives.

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But, as the Roman Church represented to their minds Christ and His religion, so Neo-Platonic, and afterward Aristotelian, philosophy represented the realm of reason—God's noblest gift to man. The same God made both reason and religion, and loyalty to Him meant equal loyalty to them both. That there was a great appearance of contradiction between them, they freely admitted; but they refused to believe that the same true God could contradict Himself by the mouths of these two witnesses. As Erigena declared at the beginning: "True philosophy is true religion, and, conversely, true religion is true philosophy" (Cousin, *Hist. Phi.*, Vol. II., p. 18, foot-note). Alain de Lille closes the first period of scholasticism saying the same thing (*Ibid.*). Do you see what was the second task of scholasticism? It was to show that the Christian religion is founded on the principles of reason. It was an arduous and heroic task; it was the same task which Theology has set her to-day to reconcile Science and Religion. Only, then Science was the philosophy of Neo-Platonism and that of Aristotle, and their religion was the whole body of Roman dogma and discipline.

Now we know what was the labor which these reverent and far-seeing intellects imposed on their zeal during the five long centuries from Erigena down to Occam; to maintain by Scrip-

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ture and the Fathers, and to develop, Roman dogma; on the other hand, to apply ancient philosophy so as to rationalize this same religion, and show that its doctrines were all based on principles of reason; to do all this so as to allow no break in the harmony between religion, Scripture, the Fathers, and philosophy—this was the task imposed on scholasticism. Faithfully, enthusiastically, and lovingly they did their work, and the great *Summas* and other books which have come down to us, are proofs of their genius, and monuments to their devotion.

We must notice now the apparatus which they employed in this stupendous labor of the intellect. It was the apparatus of logic, or the laws of reasoning. To its study they gave the greatest attention. In their loyalty to reason they reverenced the laws of reasoning, and studied under Aristotle those logical processes which God has appointed for use in the discovery and determination of truth. All discussions came to be subjected to scientific logic; and, when the long labor of scholasticism was over, one of the priceless treasures which it transmitted to modern thought was such an intelligent loyalty to the laws of thought that modern Science and Philosophy were rendered possible. This logical education of Public Opinion to require thought to obey the laws of thought, has had a formative

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influence on the sermon; it has greatly changed its form and method. It is worth the preacher's while to give a glance at the mediæval procedure.

Abelard's *Sic et Non*, or *Yes and No*, gave impetus, if not origin, to the scholastic method. This book is a collection of "the conflicting views of the Fathers on all the chief points of Christian dogmatics." His object does not seem to have been an exposure of their conflict, but to lay a foundation for a further inquiry, looking to more satisfactory results. He wished to hear both sides, weigh arguments, and then decide. It is the fairest method, and Abelard's example was decisive. His scholar, Peter Lombard, shortly afterward made a fuller collection of opinions of the Fathers with simple, popular explanations. We might call it a body of patristic divinity. He called it *The Book of Sentences* (or Opinions), and it had an immense circulation. It was followed up by the *Summas*. Professor Seth says that *Sic et Non* was undoubtedly the precursor of all these. Neander thus describes the method of the schoolmen: "To start a multitude of isolated questions on all the subjects of which they treated, to state the arguments on both sides, and then sum up with a brief decision in which regard was had to the arguments on both sides" (*Ch. H.*, Vol. VIII.,

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p. 172). We need not further discuss their methods, but may pause a moment to note several profitable results to the preacher; taking note, however, that he gets the benefit not only from his own training, but in that of his hearers; this last is an important consideration.

1. First of all, the schoolmen taught us how to argue and to test arguments. Reasoning is reduced to something like reliability.

2. They taught us how to state the question clearly and precisely. Clear definition and statement are the foundation of all satisfactory teaching and preaching. Half the sermons lose their course on the high seas for lack of clear-cut propositions and headings. This element enters into all explanations as well as arguments.

3. The schoolmen taught us how to confine *one sermon to one subject;* this is the law of homiletical monogamy. They made modern thought abhor a Noah's Ark in the sermon. This reduction of the single sermon to a single subject led to the use of short texts about the beginning of the thirteenth century. The old homily was the exposition of an extended passage of Scripture. This did well enough in the hands of a Chrysostom, but the common preacher seemed to think that he had a roving commission to chase any topic on the ocean.

4. One other result must be mentioned, the

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partition of the discourse into separate divisions. The materials were classified and the different sections were arranged in such an order that all the sides and points of the subject might be treated in a proper succession.

It is impossible to estimate the gain which the modern sermon has received from these logical methods of procedure. To confine each discourse to one subject, to analyze its contents, and treat the different parts in order so that each subordinate topic shall be taken up in turn and receive adequate consideration, to define our main and minor points clearly and precisely as we come to them, to consider fairly both sides of a question, and to test our arguments, who will not say, now that the schoolmen have taught us to use their method, that these things are indispensable in preaching God's word?

What if these ardent logicians sometimes went to absurd lengths in hair-splitting and frivolous disputation? The worth of their work does not consist in their permanent contributions to philosophy and theology—although these are much larger than it is commonly suspected—but in the discipline of mind and perfecting of method which lie at the basis of all modern thinking, and, as far as the sermon is concerned, have given it both form and procedure, and prepared its hearers to understand its doctrine.

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Besides these logical lessons, preaching learned two others from the regard which scholasticism had for tradition and philosophy. First, it must not break from the past ; doctrine must preserve its historic continuity. The same spirit which set the schoolmen to forming *catenas* of the Fathers and collecting and classifying their dogmatic utterances in *Summas* and bodies of divinity, had a leading part to play in the controversies and preaching of the Reformation. Luther appealed to the Fathers ; the English Church especially clung to them, and exhausted her learning in proving and preserving her continuity of doctrine. It is still one of the deepest instincts of the Anglican communion, and showed its power lately in the Oxford Movement. If that movement has flowed into mediæval channels to-day, the very perversion of the patristic instinct shows its abiding power. Now, one thing that our preaching needs to learn to-day is to bring back this element into the sermon and to commend it to the reverence of Christian sentiment by holding on to the past. The preacher must show that he stands in the long line of God's messengers reaching back through all the Catholic centuries to the apostles and their Master.

The second lesson which the preacher learns from the schoolmen is to reverence not only an-

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tiquity but the Reason. Philosophy, Science, Criticism, Scholarship, and Common Sense are all various developments and expressions of the Reason. Reason never sleeps; she is more unremitting than the forces of Nature; her field of operations is that same Public Opinion of which we have spoken. She is always working changes there; by long, slow dissolutions of ancient ideas, by the catastrophes of old beliefs, by precipitating social and religious revolutions, by the painful building up of new conceptions, by startling changes of mental points of view, and new organizations of thought, Reason, inspired by the same divine Spirit who wrought in holy men of old and made the Bible, is leading up God's children along the broad avenues of education into a loftier mind, a larger liberty, and a more Christ-like spirit of universal brotherhood. The preacher must do lowly homage to Reason, for God is in her; she comes with His message. We must seek to inherit the schoolman's reverence for mind. Mind, touched by the wand of the *Renaissance*, stirred Europe for the Reformation. Erasmus and Reuchlin joined forces with Luther and Melanchthon; Zwingli marched along the same sunlit heights; Calvin and his consecrated hosts were disciples of Reason, and, had they clung to antiquity with truer reverence, might have equalled, if not surpassed, the massive

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work done by Hooker and his compeers. The same work has been taken up in our age by Maurice and Robertson in the pulpit, and, in the study, by those patient toilers in criticism and theology who have revolutionized modern thought. Christian sentiment is changing as it always has done in the live epochs. The Church has got nearer to the gates of day; and a new light is breaking on her from skies that hang pregnant with the Advent—the Advent, at least, of a new and more heavenly manhood of love. The preacher who is to herald the day must exercise his reason and keep in the tide of thought. No worse evil can befall any leader than to get left by the tide of Public Opinion; for these tides of Christian sentiment are currents from the throne of God. Moreover, this is the secret of developing God's word so as to keep it abreast of Progress, and adapt its abiding truth to the advances of society and the Church.

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CHAPTER VI.

PREACHING DURING THE REFORMATION AND MODERN PERIOD.

THE Reformation owed more to preaching, perhaps, than to any other human agency. By its power the people were instructed, persuaded, fired with enthusiasm for pure religion, and animated to endure the sacrifices and persecutions which were imposed on those who broke away from the domination of Rome. It was distinguished for being strong in the four fundamentals of preaching.

It was, in the best sense, Bible preaching. The contention was everywhere that doctrine must be based on the Old and New Testaments. It was the preacher's aim to bring faith and life up to the Bible. The whole sermon moved inside of Scripture. Its exposition made the gist of preaching. Luther and Calvin, like Chrysostom and Augustine of old, expounded whole books of the Bible continuously, sometimes preaching every day. The famous Colet, dean of St. Paul's in London, as soon as he was in-

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stalled in 1505, began to interpret the New Testament in the same way, many of his hearers bringing their Greek Testaments to follow him. Erasmus was delighted. He had already said of Colet's lectures elsewhere, that hearing them was like hearing Plato again. Everywhere the Bible was studied in its original languages. It was also translated into the vernacular tongues. Luther translated it into German, Lefèvre into French, Wycliffe's translation was worked over in English. Such a thirst for God's word was never seen. The Bible sounded out from every pulpit.

Nor was it a mere intellectual interest that actuated the exposition of the sacred oracles. Perhaps Isaiah and St. Paul themselves never felt more directly sent by God to preach and write to His people than Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and Latimer. It was this sense of divine mission that kindled in them with unquenchable ardor. Luther declared: "There was nothing that I desired so much as silence. . . . Nor am I kept in the ministry of the word but by an overruled obedience to a will above my own." The word of God was a fire in their bones. John Knox, in his old age, had himself lifted into the pulpit that he might still go on preaching; but the vigor of youth returned as the divine message coursed through his soul, and it seemed to men that he would almost "fly out of

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the pulpit." Bishop Hooper was, at one time, so zealous that he preached three or four times every day.

And their great aim was godly living, righteous service of God. It was no dead, intellectual faith in Christ which they preached as the condition of salvation, but such an inspiration of living trust as would take possession of the soul, cleanse it of sin, quicken every virtue, nerve it to heroic service, and consecrate all its energies and aspirations to God. This was a faith to justify a man, give him a right standing with God, and procure him eternal life; for this faith is itself eternal life. This was the power that entered into the dead Church which all Europe had for centuries been trying to "reform in its head and members," that dead Church in which the Tetzels had gone selling their indulgences, their licenses to sin, that Church which the sacerdotal "machine" had been educating in immorality till the whole of it was rotten; it entered there by the zeal and power of these preachers, and straightway a new life was born wherever they went, and clean, sweet, earnest living was seen once more among men.

And the style was that which earnest men address to people whom they are determined to persuade. No fine-spun arguments, no rhetorical conceits, no ingenious sophistical explana-

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tions, no playing with figures, no fiddling on sounding sentences; but plain, direct, driving speech, full of sympathy for the common people, lightened up by illustration, made genial by generous humor, sweet, earnest, importunate speech that would not let the listener go. Luther said: "I regard neither doctors nor masters, of which there are in the Church above forty. But I have an eye to the multitude of young people—children and servants—of which there are more than two thousand. I preach to them." But when they did speak to the doctors and masters, they did not muffle their words for fear of men. Old Bishop Latimer tells them his mind very plainly in his *Sermon on the Plough*. They were badly neglecting their duty of preaching; but there is "one prelate," he says, "who does not neglect his duty." "There is one that passes all the others, and is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you—it is the devil. He is ever in his parish; you shall never find him unoccupied. He is ready as can be to set forth his plough; to devise as many ways as he can to deface and obscure God's glory. Where the devil is resident and has his plough going, there away with books and up with candles; away with the Bible and up with beads. . . . Oh, that our bishops would be as diligent to sow the corn of

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good doctrine as Satan is to sow cockle and darnel!"

This primitive, fourfold character given to preaching at the Reformation lasted for a century afterward, and its effects were felt by the best Roman Catholic preaching also. From the nature of the crisis in which it was born, and the religious history that followed, controversy entered in at the start as a dominating element; and it grew more and more from the force of events. The leaders themselves had to emancipate their faith from Romish tradition, and then to defend themselves by disputation with Romish champions. Public opinion was all against them at the start, and they had to convert public opinion by controversy. Hence preaching had to be polemic from the outset; a great battle of doctrines was then precipitated, and the warfare raged more and more fiercely as princes and peoples divided into two vast camps, and actual armies closed in tremendous conflict, to persecute or liberate the movement of reform.

It is a frightful spectacle presented by Europe from the death of Luther in 1549 till the termination of the Thirty Years' War in 1648, which left Germany a wilderness, and the death of Charles the First the year after, which left England and Scotland a trampled battlefield. The massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572 marks the

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storm centre of forty years of persecuting wars in France, wars renewed by Richelieu after the Edict of Nantes had given a lull, and carried on to a ruthless issue in the fall of Rochelle. The horrors of the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands mark the bloody hand of Spain and the long travail of Christian liberty to get freedom to live. This long, co-operating war of doctrine and of arms left Europe exhausted, and produced a reaction in preaching and religion which we must study later on. We must add the pitiable fact that the bitterness of controversy, not content with the strife between Rome and Reform, proceeded to divide the Protestant camp itself into two hostile factions, under Luther and Calvin.

Bitter controversy develops athletes of disputation, "mighty men of war;" but it is not favorable to oratorical culture. Eloquence is burning, very burning; argument is keen, but too eager to be fair; conviction triumphant, but destitute of the sweet persuasion of charity; diction strong, striking, and sarcastic, but lacking in grace. Beauty and charity shun the tumult, righteousness runs into zeal, morals go to the rear, or flourish the old rabbinical whip of discipline, and fealty to organized doctrine becomes the preacher's aim. The Synod of Dort, Laud's proscriptions, and the Westminster Assembly furnished the body and application of sermons to

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which the Bible lent a text, and its fragments re-enforcements.

Hence the preaching of that dogmatic century has not survived as either literature or doctrine. So little are the names of these militant preachers known as such that one is apt to think that the pulpit had failed. Their names survive in their books, and their books on forgotten shelves. But no greater mistake could be made than to think the pulpit of this century a failure. Europe was full of preachers whose stirring exhortations nerved the persecuted Protestants to fight the good fight of faith. They preached with such power in France that one great aim of their persecutors was to shut up their assemblies and drive them out of the land. The illiteracy of the parish clergy in England was so great in the reigns of Edward VI. and his sisters that homilies had to be provided for them to read ; and, as we have seen, sermon helps are fatal to preaching. But Archbishop Parker took steps for their education, and the pulpit could not but share in that wonderful advance of thought and learning that marked the age of Shakespeare and Bacon. The Marian exiles returned full of the vigor of controversy, and gave a new impetus to preaching. At the same time a wonderful devotion to Bible reading and study sprung up. Green says : " England became the people of a book,

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and that book was the Bible. . . . Elizabeth might silence or tune the pulpits; but it was impossible for her to tune the great preachers of justice and mercy and truth who spoke from the book which she had again opened for the people. . . . The whole temper of the nation was changed. A new conception of life and of man superseded the old. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class" (*Short History*, chap. viii., Sec. 1). It would be tedious to tell how these influences multiplied preachers, or describe the tremendous power which they exerted in the civil struggle that followed.

Out of all this long and far-reaching conflict was developed, during the latter half of the seventeenth century, an era of pulpit oratory of illustrious power. In England, the Anglican Church gives us Leighton, Jeremy Taylor, Barrow, Tillotson, and South. All were men of profound learning, massive intellect, and strong common sense; they were also masters of style. Bishop Taylor's style has never been excelled in richness, nor South's in point and brilliancy. The opposite party had Baxter, Owen, Flavel, Bunyan, and Howe. Owen and Howe were peers of Taylor and Barrow in learning; Baxter, Flavel, and Bunyan were full of ardor. But none of these great Puritans studied "the art of putting things;" they seem rather to have affect-

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ed a spiritual scorn of rhetoric as meretricious. They were mighty in the exposition of Scripture, but too analytical and tedious. Their thought was precious as gold, but it took a Puritan's patience to listen to their dry and exhausting discourses. But those were the days of heroic endurance, and, no doubt, the Puritan churches were filled. This is more than can be said of Barrow at least.

In France also we find two lines of distinguished preachers, one Protestant, the other Roman Catholic. Jean D'Ailly, who died in 1670, was esteemed by the Calvinists, so Van Oosterzee says, "the greatest man in his Church since the days of Calvin." Claude was a famous preacher in Paris, and so able a champion that Bossuet dreaded to cross swords with him. Dubosc was another French preacher of that age. He understood the art of eloquence, and we are told that Louis XIV., having heard him once pleading the Protestant cause, "declared that he had heard that day the most eloquent man in his kingdom." And yet he had listened to Bossuet and Bourdaloue. Later still came the most brilliant of all the French Protestants, Jacques Saurin. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 had driven his father to Geneva when he was yet a child, and he never preached in his native land. He ministered first in London, and

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then in the Hague. Broadus tells us that "Places were engaged in his church a fortnight in advance by the most distinguished persons, and people climbed up on ladders to look in at the windows." He was an orator; his thought was strong, his imagination vivid, his style rhetorical and brilliant, and his delivery chastened, but impassioned at times. He died in 1730; his sermons remained popular till the last generation; but they are too rhetorical for our taste, and their tone does not suit our sentiment.

But the great French preachers were Roman Catholics—Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Fénelon, and Massillon. For purity and grace of diction, and for the power of seizing the conscience of voluptuous and godless hearers, and moving them—for the time at least—with the sublimest conceptions of religion, these bold preachers of the "Grand Monarch's" court have never been surpassed. They flourished in a society which had cultivated taste to the highest pitch of perfection; their literary conditions were the most exacting; it was the age of Corneille and Racine; they had to encounter the greatest difficulties of eloquence. They trained their faculties for the task; they bestowed incredible labor on their compositions; they left no resource of oratory untaxed; they wrestled with the hearts of their hearers. Genius, culture, and religion combined

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to do their best, and the result was a success in preaching that rivalled that of Basil, Gregory, and Chrysostom. The following extract is made from an apostrophe uttered by Bossuet before Louis XIV, in a sermon on "Death;" in it appears the regal power of his imagination.

"My God, what are we! If I look before me, how fearful the infinity where I am not! If I look backward, how vast the space where equally I am not! And what a mere speck I fill in this boundless abyss of time! Nothing! That brief interval can scarcely separate me from nothingness. I was sent as one of many; I was not needed, and the world's tragedy were no less played out had I never appeared upon its theatre! Follow out a yet closer chain of thought, and you will see that it is not even the compass of your whole life which divides you from this nothingness—it is never more than one brief moment. Now we possess that moment; as I speak it passes away, and with it we too should pass did we not unconsciously seize hold of the next, and so on, until at last a moment will come to which we cannot cleave, howsoever earnestly we reach forth, and then we fall. . . . Truly mine age is as nothing in respect of Thee!"

Two names represent the revival of preaching in Germany during this period—Spener and

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Francke. Spener originated and Francke carried forward a deep spiritual movement for the regeneration of the Church. They labored to train up a host of godly, earnest preachers, who would rise above the level of cold theological preaching then prevalent, and establish a "*new way*," in which the great aim should be to show that Christianity consists in the inner or new man, whose soul is found in faith, with the fruits of a good life as the results." Thousands of students were gathered at the University of Halle, and were sent forth into the ministry imbued with the spirit of these masters. Spener made little of rhetoric, and it did little for him. His secret lay in his spiritual exposition and application of Scripture, and in his earnestness. But he often preached two hours at a time. His prolixity must have been dreadful. Francke's preaching is described by Ker as "not sensational, nor filled with figures and stories, but drawn from the Bible through his own heart. It was full of faith and warmth, simple and direct, referring constantly to Christ and to life through Him." The effect of this spiritual movement was felt outside of Germany, and, to use Ker's words, "One would have thought that German Christianity was entering on a long, cloudless day."

But this flowering season of the pulpit in all these nations was followed by a failure of preach-

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ing corresponding to that which followed the golden age of the great Greek preachers. Shall we attribute it to exhaustion following extraordinary effort? Not so, for human faculty and divine inspiration cannot be wearied into exhaustion. Mind springs to conquest in each new generation. No, it was new forces coming into play and changing that public opinion which realizes itself as much in preaching as in anything else. We have already seen what alterative forces operated after the Greek period; we must discover those which changed its direction after the Golden Age of Baxter and Jeremy Taylor, Bossuet and Saurin, Spener and Francke.

Yet we should not look for the causes of decay in these great preachers mainly, although the failure must be attributed to them in part. They built squarely on the four foundations we have been considering, and to this fact their success is due. One and all they were Bible preachers. This hardly needs proving in the case of the English, for their use of Scripture was almost excessive, as everybody knows. The Pietist movement in Germany under Spener and Francke had for its very inspiration the spiritual exposition and application of the Bible. But fidelity to God's word was equally distinctive of all the eminent French preachers also, both Protestant and Romish. Bossuet was a wonderful lover of

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the sacred Book. When yet a little boy, voracious of all reading, one day he found his father's Bible open at Isaiah, his father and uncle being engaged for the moment in a warm disputation. The sublime poetry caught the boy's eye, and he began to read aloud. His voice rose as he read on, and the eager disputants stopped to listen to the thrilling tones. From that day the Bible was his constant companion and study. His preaching is full of it.

The great aim of these preachers was godly living. This gave elevation to the Puritan pulpit; it taught Jeremy Taylor his noblest rhetoric, and inspired even the fierce spirit of South. How vividly and fully the preachers at the "Grand Monarch's" court painted the gilded, godless passions and voluptuous immorality of master and courtier alike, and denounced against them the burning judgment of God! For nothing did the early Pietists of Germany labor more ardently than for righteousness of life.

Mysticism was in the age. The true Pietist and Puritan believed in "the life of God in the soul of man." They were men of prayer, living in close communion with God, devout men, full of the Holy Ghost. But who was more spiritual than saintly Leighton? Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying* was written, as it were, in the Holy of Holies. Claude and Saurin were

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men of like spirit. None can read the sermons of the great French preachers without feeling that God was speaking through them. What but a feeling that they were sent by God could have emboldened them to face their despotic king and rebuke his vice! "I often leave other preachers thinking what fine speakers they are," said Louis XIV., "but when I have heard Father Massillon, I think what a poor sinner I am." All these distinguished men felt that they were messengers from God to man, and they delivered their message with all their heart. It was this that gave such ardor to the sermons of that age.

All the French preachers, as we have seen, gave great care to the rhetorical structure of their sermons, especially the Roman Catholics. They addressed cultured hearers in an artistic age. The preachers of the Church of England also were careful to adapt their style to the culture of their hearers. Puritan and Pietist preachers neglected rhetoric, and it took vengeance on them. They regarded beauty as the apple of Eden, and aimed to get rid of the forbidden fruit. At most they esteemed "beauty when unadorned adorned the best." While enthusiasm still kindled in the sermon, it wove a spell of its own, but when its mystic fire died out, what charm was there in the snuffling of Calvinistic argument or

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the whining of Pietistic cant? This lack of beauty was one cause that lowered the value of preaching in popular estimation.

The degeneration of sentiment into cant as the tide of mysticism ebbed away was another cause. Mysticism moves deep and lively sentiment; and this takes set forms of expression for lack of vigorous thinking. The devotion of mysticism to feeling is unfriendly to vigorous thinking. When the mystic era passes, the set forms survive the life of sentiment and become cant. Cant is the dialect of dead sentiment. It is the very mockery of once living sentiment, and makes it a laughing stock. The Puritan dialect had unction in it when Puritan faith inspired Cromwell's "Ironsides." The Bible idiom of Halle was a fresh voice after the old dogmatic antiphons, and all the world listened to its sacred solos. But both alike came to be empty of the old mystic inspiration, and then public opinion turned against the preacher whose sermons only tinkled with the commonplaces of cant.

What aggravated the reaction was the exclusive religious arrogance that grew out of perverted mysticism. True mysticism shrinks from divulging its secrets to the multitude. It seeks congenial spirits; it unites with them also in confidential circles to cultivate the spiritual life. For this use Spener formed what he called the

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"*ecclesiola in ecclesia*," the little church in the great one. This is a genuine and proper exclusiveness of the spirit. But it has this great danger, the cultivation of religion in an exclusive circle tends to form an aristocracy of piety which looks down on common Christians. Let the impulse of true mysticism die away. Then the circle of piety becomes the circle of Pharisees. The preacher becomes the organ of this circle, and preaching is made odious in the eyes of public opinion.

Reaction in public opinion came first in England. A decay of reverence set in. The Puritans had destroyed reverence for historic doctrine; in turn, their later excessive cant and mouthing of Scripture destroyed reverence for spirituality and the Bible. Men turned away from supernatural authority in all its forms, tradition, polity, Scripture, and mystical guidance by the Spirit. One guide was left—reason. The age of reason succeeded the ages of authority. Let us have no more of Holy Scripture and Holy Church, of apostolic tradition and inward inspiration. Puritans and prelates have harried England and sickened it with their battles over these exploded authorities. Let us have something that appeals to reason and common sense. Preachers have done with this prating of the past. Give us a religion of the pres-

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ent. Rationalize your religion and your morality. Philosophy found a ready chorus in the court. The debauchee king and his profligate crew were glad enough to get rid of all messages from God, and have their consciences mended by the priest. The wits and harlots at Whitehall danced and revelled all the better because God had been dethroned from the pulpit to make room for philosophy. Philosophy pricks no consciences, and is a favorite with the wits. Moreover, it was an age of quickened activity in Science, and although Newton and other leaders retained their faith, the materializing tendency of Science, so often inimical to things spiritual, made itself felt on the side of rationalism.

Now, it is not meant that any set of men deliberately planned this new departure of public opinion. No, but that all these currents of influence began to run together about the time of the Restoration; and, in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, public opinion had reacted from those divine ideas which make religion, and give the preacher his loftiest inspiration. It was steadily flowing in the direction of rationalism and ethics.

Perhaps it would be well to look a little more closely at the history of this rationalizing movement. Already in the sixteenth century Hooker had defended the polity and doctrine of the

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Church by showing this conformity to reason. He took a long step toward rationalizing religion. Not that one single inch of his step was wrong; only he gave impetus to a movement that was carried finally to a dangerous extreme. In those days Reason was coming into her kingdom. Great minds were stirring in the century of the Stuarts—Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Kepler, Spinoza, Newton, and Leibnitz. Creative words were sounding in the soul; new methods of inquiry, which are dominating thought today, were beginning to be framed. Bacon taught Science to discard ancient theories, and to discover and establish every law by the observation of facts. Descartes required Philosophy to question every traditional principle and found it on reason; there must be "some clear principle or ground of certitude on which to base all thought—some touchstone by which to test it" (Tulloch's *Rational Thought in Eng.*, Vol. II., p. 483). While High Churchmen were falling back on patristic authority, and Puritans were resting on the equally arbitrary authority of Confessions, and while both alike were interpreting Scripture by a barefaced literalism which devitalized its spirit and turned its fabric into a polemical patchwork of texts, while both alike were also despising the authority of that law which, as Hooker showed, God has implanted in

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the reasonable nature of man—in this insensate war, men began to despair at length of finding any sure ground on which to base religion. But out of this despair was born a new movement. Thoughtful minds began to ask: What right has any authority, patristic or Confessional, to impose its dogmas on the free conscience of man? Has not God's very gift of reason to be the guide of man, made reason to be the final authority in matters of faith? Religion is not a despotism of Church authority, be it Episcopalian or Presbyterian; it is a "reasonable service" rendered to God. John Hales, Chillingworth, Jeremy Taylor, and Stillingfleet stood firmly for the "liberty of prophesying"—that is, for the liberty of each man to interpret Scripture for himself. They pleaded that it is impossible for all men to agree in judgment except on a few fundamentals, such as are contained in the Apostles' Creed; and that, beyond these, honesty of conviction is alone to be required of Christians. On these terms the whole nation may constitute one church; and to insist on more is to destroy the peace and unity of the Church. Every Christian must use his own reason in studying God's word, and is responsible to Him for using it to the best of his ability. Hales had learned this from the defence made by the Arminians at the Synod of Dort. Hunt says "he preferred

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reason to authority" (*Rel. Thought*, Vol. I., p. 370). Chillingworth argued: "All must use their reason in choosing their religion. If not, they disobey the plain commands to try the spirits, to render a reason, and to prove all things. They that receive a religion without a reason, offer to God 'the sacrifice of fools'" (*Ibid.*, p. 382).

But while these Christian philosophers were trying to "depreciate the principle of mere arbitrary rule both in politics and religion—to carry men's minds away from traditional canons and dogmas to the true sphere of authority in reason and conscience"—the rationalizing movement received a tremendous impetus from a wholly opposite quarter. The bold philosophical spirit of Hobbes set aside both tradition and Scripture, and audaciously essayed to build up the whole system both of religion and government on the basis of philosophy. Curiously enough, his use of reason conducted him at length to a theory of the most arbitrary government that modern thought has ever constructed. He used private judgment to take away the right of private judgment, just as the Church of Rome has done. But our interest lies in the fact that his radical and sweeping application of reason to the construction of religion gave an excessive development to the rationalizing movement. His book,

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Leviathan, published in 1651, stirred the world. Not only was his method adopted by his followers, but the champions of reasonable religion were compelled to answer him on his own grounds.

Meantime, a movement had begun at Cambridge with several "latitudinarian divines" who may be termed religious philosophers. In their writings, says Tulloch, "we pass into a higher, if not more bracing, atmosphere than that in which we have been dwelling in the pages of Hales and Chillingworth. They discussed larger questions and principles of a more fundamental and far-reaching character. They sought, in a word, to marry philosophy to religion, and to confirm the union on the indestructible basis of reason and the essential elements of our higher humanity. . . . It was the first elaborate attempt to wed Christianity and philosophy made by any Protestant school; and it may even be said to have been the first true attempt of the kind since the days of the great Alexandrine teachers. For the Christian philosophies of the Middle Ages, noble as many of them were, did not originate in a free interchange of philosophic and religious affection. Philosophy, even in the hands of so vigorous and independent a thinker as Anselm—still more in the hands of his successors, the great schoolmen

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of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—was the servitor rather than the handmaid of faith. . . . [They] sought to fuse it [the new spirit of speculation] into a philosophy of religion at once free and conservative, in which the rights of faith and the claims of the speculative intellect should each have free scope, and blend together for mutual elevation and strength" (*Rat. Theol.*, Vol. II., p. 13ff.). Several of them were great preachers, and impressed their ideas on the students with power. Whichcote, John Smith, Worthington, and Culverwel show what the pulpit can do. They worked on Hooker's lines. Their rationalism was profoundly spiritual. Says Whichcote: "Divine truth speaks for itself; it recommends itself to its subject; it satisfies the reason of the mind, procures its own entertainment by its own excellency. I receive the truth of the Christian religion in way of illumination, affection, and choice. I myself am taken with it as understanding and knowing it. I retain it as a welcome guest; it is not forced into me; but I let it in—yet so as taught of God. Do I dishonor my faith, or do any wrong to it to tell the world that my reason and understanding are satisfied in it? I have no reason against it; yea, the highest and purest reason is for it."

In John Smith we have a mingling of philoso-

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phy and mysticism of the truest kind. Inner observation of the soul, and divine revelation must be the grounds of our religion. But the soul must be purified by virtue to get the beatific vision. He distinguished different degrees in which the spiritual faculty is cultivated. "There is, first of all, what he calls 'the complex and multifarious man, in whom reason and sense are so intermixed and twisted up together that his knowledge cannot be laid out into its first principles.' And so he becomes the victim of custom and vulgar opinion. In such a man the higher notions of God and religion are 'so entangled with the bird-lime of fleshly passions and mundane vanity, that He cannot rise to any but earthly conceptions of heavenly things.' . . . There is, secondly, the Rationalist, or the man who 'thinks not fit to view his own face in any other glass but that of reason and understanding.' 'In such a one the common principles of virtue and moral goodness are more clear and steady.' Thirdly, there is the mystic, who has an 'inward sense of virtue and moral goodness far transcendent to all mere speculative opinions; but whose soul is apt too much to heave and swell with a sense of his own virtue and knowledge.' An 'ill ferment of self-love lying at the bottom' frequently puffs up such a soul with pride, arrogance, and self-conceit. Lastly, there

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is the 'true metaphysical and contemplative man, who running and shooting up above his own logical or self-rational life, pierceth into the highest life. . . . To such a one the Platonists are wont to attribute a true divine wisdom, powerfully displaying itself in an intellectual life, as they phrase it. Such a knowledge, they say, is always pregnant with divine virtue, which ariseth out of a happy union of souls with God, and is nothing else but a living imitation of a godlike perfection drawn out by a strong fervent love of it'" (*Ibid.*, p. 149f.).

In the main, the whole school dealt with religion in a philosophical rather than in a scriptural way. With all their spirituality they felt deeply the rationalizing tendencies of the age, and cast the lines of their preaching and argument in that way. The basis of their operations was philosophy, and not Scripture. Tulloch says: "The noble distinction of the Cambridge Platonists is that they at once rationalized religion, and vindicated its distinctive reality" (*Ibid.*, p. 470). "If God and immortality can be verified by human inquiry and reasoning at all, they can only be verified in the line of their thought" (*Ibid.*, p. 471). "They were the great champions of the reality of religion when the excesses of its partisans drove their age to unbelief. They stood in the breach and fought for the

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good cause with the weapon of reason, when many of the cowardly fanatics who had disgraced it, were swept away with the new tide or were silent in their ignorant and irrational isolation" (*Ibid.*, p. 472). "They essayed anew, in a distracted and unbelieving age, to verify the divine; not merely to witness it to man's reason and conscience, but to construe it into a philosophy, and rear a science of religion" (*Ibid.*, p. 485). Dominant in all their thinking was the philosophy of Plato, or rather of Plotinus, the apostle of Neo-Platonism.

No two things could be more unlike in spirit and aim than the *Leviathan* of Hobbes and the work of the Cambridge Platonists; and yet, unawares, both united in the great tendency of the age to rationalize religion, and draw it away from its true ground in Scripture. Preaching changed more and more from a message taken out of God's word, and fashioned in prayer and the study of human need into an *Intellectual System of the Universe, Wherein all the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism is Refuted.* This is the title of Cudworth's great work directed against the *Leviathan* of Hobbes. It well describes the tendency of the rationalizing of religion in the seventeenth century. But the results of the movement did not develop themselves till the next age. The eighteenth century may well be

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called the Dark Age of Protestantism. The supremacy of "Natural Religion," as it is called —that is, a religion derived from "the Light of Nature," without the aid of revelation, led an easy way to the development of Deism.

But we must hasten on. Deism grew apace; it soon overleaped the safe limits in which the Cambridge Platonists had been working; near the middle of the eighteenth century, Bishop Butler is found wrestling with the Deists in his *Analogy*. It was published in 1736. The defection was enormous. In the preface he says: "It has come to be taken for granted that Christianity is no longer a subject of inquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be factitious, and accordingly it is treated as if, in the present age, this was an agreed point among all persons of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject for mirth and ridicule."

We have seen what philosophy was doing during this mortal conflict on the arena of public opinion; our eager cry is, What was the pulpit doing? The pulpit had lost its enthusiasm. Unworthy men were put into the episcopate by the Stuarts, and their influence told disastrously. On a second St. Bartholomew's Day, just ninety years after the first, the rotten king of the Restoration had driven from the pulpit of the Church

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of England two thousand earnest, conscientious ministers—a host of Protestant "non-jurors," if we may use the epithet, by whose side the little handful of Jacobite objectors to William and Mary dwindle into a cipher, good as they were in personal saintliness. Baxter, Howe, Owens, and the most fervent spiritual element of the English clergy, notwithstanding their narrow scrupulosity and excessive mysticism, went off one way into exile, dooming themselves to poverty, their children to illiteracy, their influence to extinction, and the faith of many at last to Arianism. Charles and his motley rout of libertines and country squires went off another way, to temple and theatre mixed, the mixture being chief part theatre, and the most licentious theatre the world ever saw at that. In their train dangled the court bishops and clergy, some good and some bad—poor Jeremy Taylor, far away in Ireland, no doubt, halting and hanging back—South raging equally against courtiers and Puritans, the gentle genius of Tillotson trying to dam the deluge with apologetics, ethics, and rhetoric, while the wits laughed, and Hobbes' *Leviathan* took his pastime therein with rejuvenated vigor.

Public opinion in England was spiritually dying, and this told on the body of preachers, as it always does, until some of God's true prophets spring up and fire the soul. The

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prophets were not to spring up for a long time to come. Here and there was a true man of God like Leighton, Ken, or Doddridge; but they were voices crying in the wilderness, and the multitudes did not go out to them as they did to John. There were strong men in the pulpit—Tillotson whose clear and vigorous style made an era in preaching; Stillingfleet and Burnet, Pearson and Bull, Atterbury, Sherlock and Secker, Watts and Doddridge, Warburton and Horsley. These names represent a powerful body of preachers who struggled to Christianize public opinion during this rationalistic century. They represent much labor, wide learning, robust and alert intellect, profound philosophical inquiry—in a Pearson exhaustive theological study of the Bible, and in a Doddridge the old mystic element of communion with God. But the weapons of this warfare were not spiritual as a rule; when Pearson uses Scripture, he uses it theologically; Doddridge gets his messages directly from God, but he fights well-nigh single-handed. Pity he cannot summon to his side Jonathan Edwards from across the ocean! Neither could he, like his German contemporary, Francke, inspire and organize a following. He was a survival, and not a leader. His generation had ebbed away and left him stranded. Hunt says: "With Dr. Doddridge we take leave of the last represen-

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tative of the old English dissenters in their best moods'' (*Rel. Th.*, Vol. III., p. 246).

What was the result of this century of rationalistic preaching? And we do not mean by this term that there was any attempt to explain away any part or truth of Scripture; we do not use the term in the modern sense of *sceptical*. We simply mean preaching in which the use of the reasoning powers was the principal element; in which they were addressed, and the heart was neglected. What was the result of this century of intellectual preaching, in which the pulpit surrendered itself to be a lectureship on philosophical evidences of Christianity, doctrine, and morals? Let us not deny that good was done. Management by authority was laid low, liberty of conscience set up; tradition was forbidden to exalt itself over the Bible; men were taught to render God a reasonable service; the foundations of religion and righteousness were shown to be laid in common sense; many old difficulties were removed and errors were exploded; cant and false mysticism were laughed out of the land.

Still the vital question returns, What effect did this century of intellectual preaching leave behind on the faith of men and the vitality of the Church? We have already heard Bishop Butler's testimony. Lecky cites Addison as saying: "There was less appearance of religion in

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England than in any neighboring State or kingdom, whether it be Protestant or Catholic." Sir John Barnard complained that "it really seemed to be the fashion for a man to declare himself to be of no religion." Montesquieu observed that "the subject of religion, if mentioned in society, excited nothing but laughter." Lecky goes on to say: "The selfishness, the corruption, the worship of expediency, the scepticism as to all higher motives that characterized the politicians of the school of Walpole, the heartless cynicism reigning in fashionable life, . . . may all be traced in the popular theology." Sunday was generally desecrated; Sunday card parties were fashionable (*England in Eighteenth Cent.*, Vol. III., chap. viii., pp. 13, 14, 17). About 1765 Blackstone, the celebrated lawyer, curious to learn what kind of preaching prevailed, went to hear every preacher of note in London. "He says that he did not hear a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero, and that it would have been impossible for him to discover from what he heard whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius, Mahomet, or Christ!" (Ryle's *Christ. Leaders*, p. 15.) Mr. Gladstone expressed a fear in 1879 that "the preaching of the Gospel a hundred years ago had disappeared, not by denial, but by lapse, from the majority

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of Anglican pulpits" (*Gleanings*, Vol. VII., p. 207).

The same movement passed over from England into France in the eighteenth century. Voltaire, the Encyclopædists, and Rousseau did "missionary work" for infidelity, with fearful results, disclosed at length in the ferocity and atheism of the French Revolution. The pulpit quickly sunk into contempt after Massillon and Fénelon. In Germany, the Wolfian philosophy led to a similar rationalizing movement called "*Illuminism*." Ker says: "As a rule it transformed Christianity into a system of morality mixed up with the secular topics of the day" (*Hist. of Pr.*, p. 264). He does not think the results of such sermons encouraging, and adds: "When the people found the pulpit occupied with bare moralities and cold secularism, they gradually fell away from Church attendance." We learn from Van Oosterzee: "There appeared during the second half of the eighteenth century 'agricultural' discourses, 'nature sermons' and 'field sermons,' homiletical commendations of vaccination and silkworm culture, a Palm Sunday sermon on the damaging of trees, a Pentecost sermon on drunkenness, and still another on the exciting theme, 'How wise the arrangement that death comes, not at the beginning, but at the end of life'" (*Practical The-*

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ology, p. 124). He further informs us that, during this period, skeletons and other sermon-helps for second-hand preaching abounded.

We may sum up the whole age-long labor of reason and learning to save the world by philosophy and ethics, in St. Paul's comment on the like abortive attempt in antiquity, "The world by wisdom knew not God." This golden text should be written over every pulpit. The tendency of philosophizing in religion is to divert interest from the labor of keeping in living touch with God, and to fix it on the developing of Divine truth along the lines of reason and ethics. It may find its basilar premise, as John Smith and the other Platonists did, in the revelation of God by intuition to the reason and conscience; but the philosophical instinct to use the revelation for further reasoning overwhelms the mystical instinct to sit at the feet of God for spiritual communion and enlightenment. The revelation comes as a premise and not as a message, and the preacher turns philosopher and ceases to be a messenger. Now the people respond differently to the two. What comes on the basis of reasoning we receive as debatable and therefore questionable. The frame of mind both of the preacher and hearer is one of open judgment. The preacher lacks urgency, and the people wait to hear the other side, or rest satisfied with giving

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their assent. But, when the prophet comes directly from communion with God, filled with what he believes to be a message from Him which he must impress, there is an eagerness in his delivery, an imperiousness of persuasion, however fairly and deliberately he may argue, that leaves no room for hesitation. He will not be satisfied with bare assent, but presses for action. And the people, who are always more inspired by the tone of eager interest in their welfare, and positiveness of conviction, and the consciousness of Divine mission than they are by the quality of the logic, yield their mind to the messenger of God, and fall heartily in behind his lead. Add to this that the sense of message opens their hearts to the working of the Holy Ghost far better than the logical frame, and He moves upon their wills with far greater power.

Another great danger of this system of philosophical preaching is the tendency to turn godly living into ethical culture. "*Walking with God*" is religion; personal fellowship, keeping the heart tender to the touch of God, feeling out for His spiritual impulses, watching to please Him, guarding against every offence, seeking the sense of His commendation as the chief blessing of life, trusting to His love for all providence, looking forward to the heavenly city as the supreme reward. Of course this includes all

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ethical living, but it is a far larger and fuller life. When one begins to live according to reason he gets away from God, he imprisons his ethical appetence in the world, he forms abstract ideals of righteousness, he lowers inspiration to social motives; the intellectual interest is attended by spiritual languor; he becomes a philosopher, he no longer aspires to be a saint.

And withal philosophy displaces Scripture. In the beginning, a spirit like John Smith's may mingle the language of the Bible with the idiom of Greece; Plato and Plotinus may add their treasures of wisdom to those of Isaiah, Paul, and John; there is, perhaps, a rich brocading of the sermon with the gold of Zion and the silver of the schools; but Philosophy surely creeps ahead, for culture runs to reason; and when the Platonists disappear, the Platonic predilection which they have engendered and cultivated supplants Scripture; preaching ceases to be the word of God, strengthens itself with human arguments, accepts human ideals, and comes down to that "common sense" of men which means little more than the adulterated conventions of trade, politics, and fashion.

Besides all this, philosophy moves in the circle of abstractions, which can never be made popular; it strips the sermon of those concrete, living instances and ideals which abound in Scripture;

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it forces it away from that living experience of Christians which so vividly illustrates, and so powerfully enforces religion. The true rhetoric of oratory is gone; preaching becomes insipid, and loses its hold on the heart; the churches are emptied, or become clubs of the cultured; and the great masses for whom Christ died are alienated from religion, and go their swinish way.

The Revival of Preaching.

That the element of mysticism, or personal communion with God, which had disappeared from the pulpit during this rationalizing century of failure, was the one thing whose absence made the failure, and whose return was needed for the mending, was demonstrated by its restoration at the middle of the eighteenth century. The inspiration began to move on the Dead Sea of public opinion so widely, and yet so imperceptibly, that one cannot say exactly when or where.

Warburton said that William Law begot Methodism. Law was a High Churchman, who published *The Serious Call to a Holy Life* in 1729. This mystic book deeply impressed many. Old Dr. Johnson was one, Henry Venn and Thomas Scott were others; most important of all were Whitefield and the two Wesleys. John Wesley said that Law's books sowed the seeds of Meth-

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odism. The movement was progressive, Whitefield and the two Wesleys being the chief leaders; but there were others—that pure spirit Fletcher of Madeley, the ardent souls who gathered around Lady Huntingdon, Henry Grimshaw and Berridge, Romaine, Henry Venn, John Newton, and Thomas Scott. There were the Milners and Cecil, and Wilberforce, and Simeon. Overton says of Wilberforce's *Practical View of Christianity*, that no book since Law's *Spiritual Call* had exerted so deep and wide an influence (*Eng. Ch.*, Vol. II., p. 219). The genius of Hannah More contributed to the movement. It soon became evident that a new and divine power was at work in England and America, and a new spiritual current rising in public opinion. Preaching was inspired again; it had come to be a message from God, and again it had returned with renewed affection to the Bible. The new element was manifest from the beginning, although even wise judges mistook its origin. Warburton complained of Wesley because "he believed that God's Spirit was still in the world, miraculously renewing the hearts of men." "Bishop Butler told Wesley that belief in the immediate guidance of God's Spirit was a horrid thing—a very horrid thing!" (Hunt's *Rel. Thought*, Vol. III., p. 395.) The Methodists did not, nor did they wish to, monopolize the

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movement. It extended itself to all parts of the Church of England in time; although Mr. Gladstone denies that the distinctive Evangelical school, as it was called, absorbed large numbers in England itself. A great revival arose; godly living invaded those circles which of late had laughed at religion; George III. deeply sympathized, and the Divine influence pervaded all ranks, from the king on his throne to the collier in the mines. The great foreign missionary societies were formed. William Carey, Henry Martin, and Bishop Heber went out to India, and Judson to Burmah. It would be impossible to enumerate all the fruits of the revival.

But mysticism, even the truest, has its ever-returning dangers. We have seen them already. An overweening confidence in the supernatural, an excessive resort to it, and a presumptuous neglect of the natural. This was the *pinnacle temptation* with which Satan plied our Lord just after His baptism. Mystic illumination is prone to neglect two natural agencies especially, *churchmanship* and *reason*. Still it must have something to go on in doctrine and operation. Out of the truths of Scripture and tradition it creates its *impromptu* creed, flinging what it does not deign to use away; and out of its improvised experiments it constructs a working scheme for practice. Worst of all, it forces these shifts on

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all as the conditions of evangelical religion. Mysticism runs to narrowness and despotism. We know also how formulas of piety lose reality and decompose into cant. We have seen, moreover, how aristocratic self-righteousness is a besetting sin when the mystic circle of the saints draw out of touch with the great Church of God, in order to be holier than other men.

All these dangers were developing badly just after the first quarter of the present century. It is a great subject involving all the churches, but time requires us to confine our consideration just now to the main development in the Church of England, from which it spread to all others in Britain and America. Two corrective movements, one for *churchmanship*, the other for the use of *reason*, originated at this crisis. The former, the *Tractarian*, developed more rapidly, and will be noticed first, although really it started last.

The Tractarian, or Oxford Movement.

It was based on deep needs of the spiritual life; its results are working to-day in all denominations, hence all owe it a debt of gratitude. Inspiration for a great cause must *embody* itself. When the cause of liberty arms the people they cannot fight for an abstract principle; they fight for country. In 1776 the colonies did not war

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for naked freedom, but for America. Daring little Greece is sending her barefoot soldiers to the frozen soil of Thessaly to-day,* not for any ghost of freedom haunting the Acropolis, but for a free Hellas, whose children, unfettered from the Turk, may unite in one Hellenic nation, and renew the age of Pericles under the shadow of the Parthenon. Now the Church is the visible kingdom of heaven in which the followers of Christ may spend their inspiration. It is something for the heart to see—the visible object of our love, labor, and sacrifice. Notions of polity differ; many will not harmonize with Newman and Pusey as to form, but all are one with them in this, *we must have a church.* Not only the heart needs it, but Christian co-operation in worship and work. This is coming to be too evident to need enlargement.

Moreover, every communion loves to identify itself with the venerable Church of history which descends to us from the hands of Christ. There must be historic continuity, for a deep instinct of Christian sentiment feels that the visible, as well as the invisible, Church is the body of Christ; the body of Christ can never have ceased to be. Another instinctive demand is that the unity of the invisible body of Christ shall be rep-

* Written in March, 1897.

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resented in the visible Church. Many will decline to hold with Pusey and Keble as to the notes and forms of unity, but all instinctively yearn for the thing itself under some universal and organic form; the yearning was never stronger than it is to-day. These and other kindred instincts unite in one deep sentiment which we venture to call *churchmanship* for want of a better term. We strip it of everything denominational, and use the term in that high and catholic sense in which church-loving Christians of every name may freely use it.

We cannot even sketch the history of this movement, we can only note what sentiment inspired it. It was a movement to exalt and to endear that Divine organization which makes the spiritual Body of Christ visible to all souls and one in all. These vituperated Tractarians proposed an object for the Christian heart on which its love could fasten, an object hallowed by such associations as cling around no other holy thing of the past, an object which all can have as their spiritual home, a dear country, a new Jerusalem on earth which can join all the family of Christ into one. Their labor was to exalt this idea, to organize this unity, to adorn this Church with reverent and hearty worship, to beautify it outwardly with the glories of architecture, to inspire its devotions with heavenly

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music, to order their forms with saintly decorum, and enrich its services and sacraments with all the garniture of splendid vestment and ritual. Let their bigotry and blunders go ; guard as anxiously as you will against sensuousness and superstition. Dangers? Yes, a thousand! There is dynamite in everything Divine! But do not deny this deep principle of churchmanship in its nobler sense, which to-day is moving the spirit in every Church, beautifying its temples, stealing souls with song, from cathedral choir down to Hallelujah Lasses, stealing them from Satan, which is calling for Christian unity, and organizing it in Evangelical Alliances, Young Men's Christian Associations, St. Andrew's Brotherhoods, Endeavorers, King's Daughters, and what not, which is going to do great things in the near future which have not yet entered into the heart of man to conceive. Do not deny it ; and, most of all, let the preacher, above all other men, get its inspiration in his soul to give great nature's help to that deeper, Diviner, mystic inspiration which flows from the breath of the Spirit of God. Who can tell how great a debt we owe for it to these vituperated Tractarians?

The Broad Church Movement.

It really antedated the Tractarian. Ten or fifteen years before, Coleridge began to sow seed,

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and in 1825 there were Oxford "Platonists" in Oriel. But there was a decline before 1840, and a modified revival shortly after. This movement meant *reason in religion*, or, as St. Paul calls it, "reasonable service." "We are saved by faith," but faith in anything but reality is a snare; reason finds and verifies reality. It is the organ used of God to direct and support our faith. Therefore reason is essential to Christian faith. Not the Holy Ghost only, but Satan also in the robes of light raises feelings and experiences in the soul that seem to come from God. Only reason can "try the spirits whether they be of God." Faith believes in the Word of God, but the devil has proved his every lie from Scripture; only reason can interpret Scripture for faith. Faith, as she grows intelligent, requires a reason to be found in the nature of things, or a philosophical explanation of doctrine and ethics; reason has to satisfy her doubts. Faith has to believe in sacred history, and in that of her sacred books; reason brings historical criticism to their testing and proof. Thus, every way, faith is always falling back on reason to satisfy her doubts, solve her problems, and interpret her doctrines. Not that reason creates the saving thing of faith; "it is the gift of God;" "no man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." But though faith has been divinely

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gendered and nourished in the soul by the Holy Ghost, it still has all these needs, and God throws her back on reason as the natural power which she must use on pain of death. It is the deadly sin of presumption for faith to ask God to do that for her which He has appointed that she should do for herself by the divinely given faculty of reason.

Now men like Coleridge, Julius Hare, Whately, Arnold, Milman, McCleod Campbell, Maurice, F. W. Robertson, and Stanley felt the Divine obligation of reasoning out their religion, and devoted their lives to "justifying the ways of God to man." The field is broad—philosophy, science, sociology, research, historical criticism, philology, scientific exegesis, all are departments. But all must be worked as duty to God in the use of faculty. One might as well ask God to give him daily bread without the use of his hands as to give him truth without the use of reason. *The supernatural works through the natural*, and not apart from it. He can best expect the illumination of the Holy Ghost who most faithfully uses his reason to get it. Now all this is the working principle of the Broad Church movement. Who can fail to thank God for the wonderful opening up of the Divine truth which has come to us through the use of reason in all these departments? We have no time to

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dwell on this movement or sketch its history. We can only pause to impress it on the preacher to keep on the rising wave of this noble advance, and use his reason in dealing with reasonable beings.

But there is a serious danger in the Broad Church movement against which the preacher must vigilantly guard. We saw how the impulse given to philosophizing by "rational theology in the Church of England in the seventeenth century," notwithstanding the deep spirituality and scripturalness of the Cambridge Platonists, captivated the pulpit, led it gradually off from Scripture to the grounds of natural religion and ethics, seduced the preacher from mystic communion with God, changed the sermon from a divine message into human argument and speculation, robbed it of oratorical power by substituting abstractions of the reason for the living portraiture of Bible teaching, and resulted in the dry, unspiritual, finally godless, discoursing of the succeeding century, with its blight of religion, secularization of Christian hope, ossification of worship, denial of the personal ministration of the Holy Ghost, general growth of infidelity, and the disastrous corruption of morals.

The rationalizing of religion has invaluable uses in the Church and her pulpit: to exclude

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or to neglect it is to gender superstition, or make religion arbitrary and offensive to common sense; but it also has the serious dangers which have just been pointed out. The Broad Churchmanship of to-day has not altogether escaped them; it should ask itself seriously if it be not already going the way of the eighteenth century. The pulpit must not arrest its true progress, but it must mind with solicitude the danger signals which are flying all around.

Conclusion and Lessons.

What have we learned from this rapid transit through the long history of preaching?

1. We have discovered that preaching is not an appendage to public worship, but a vital part, able to do more, perhaps, than any other human part, to inspire a sense of the Divine presence, faith, prayer, penitence, praise, and adoration. It teaches us a reasonable religion, applies it to our various needs, and sends us out to do God's will. History shows us that the prevalence or poverty of true preaching is not only a sign, but a vital cause "of a rising or falling Church."

2. We have learned also that the preacher must get his message from the Bible. He has never left it without decay of religion, never returned to it without a revival. And he must keep fast

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the whole Bible. Whatever criticism may do with the story of origins and authorship, the Church's experience has proved that all its pages are full of God's Spirit; no part but has helped her in some hour of need. The preacher must handle its parts with discrimination, but he must not mutilate any. The spiritual verdict of the ages is, *The whole Bible for the whole pulpit.*

But God's Word, having been composed according to the laws of language, must be interpreted according to the laws of language. Not by allegory, nor by second meanings, nor by dogmatic bias, nor insulated texts, nor sentiment, but by grammar, context, history, spiritual insight, and the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

Yet, at the same time, the Word of God, being a living thing, grows in meaning by assimilation of all human experience and thought. The preacher must take up into his interpretation of Scripture all the light that human progress shows, and, just as the Master did, develop more and more the spiritual range of Scripture, and its expanding provision for all the expanding life of Christianized mankind.

But, with all these changes, there is such a thing as "the faith once delivered to the saints." The reasoning Christian feels that religion, or man's relation to God, cannot essentially change, because God's nature and man's are constant

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factors. You may adapt, but you cannot alter the faith. Men look instinctively for immutability, for historic continuity in religion. The Church loves to look back along the line of Brooks, Liddon, Spurgeon, and Newman, Simeon, Wesley, and Whitefield, Owen and Barrow, Hooker, Ridley, and Cranmer, Luther and Calvin, Savonarola, Bernard, Aquinas, and Anselm, Gregory, Leo, Augustine, and Athanasius, Cyprian, Irenæus, Polycarp, and Clement, and feel that the one Gospel which came from the apostles and her Lord, in that first stadium of her journey, has passed intact through all these hands, and come to her entire, like her Lord, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

3. Next to getting his sermon out of the Bible, the preacher needs to get it as a message direct from God. He does not go to the Book of God as to a case of medicines, depending only on his human art. He goes to God for counsel, that God who is no stranger to his soul, for he walks with Him day by day.

In preparing his sermon, he will go to God, as called to receive a message as truly as Samuel was called to receive a message for Eli. Not, indeed, through audible voice, such as Samuel heard, but through prayer and meditative inquiry in the actual presence of God; and he expects that the Holy Ghost will direct his mind toward

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the present needs of his flock. Two things chiefly will furnish the materials of his message, Holy Scripture, and the facts which he learns about his people. By means of these two guides he trusts to pray his way into his message through the suggestions inspired by the Holy Ghost. Thus, meditative inquiry of God through study, both of his flock and Scripture, will be his supreme and perpetual dependence in getting a message from God. So the materials of the sermon, coming from these sources, will find immediate recognition among the hearers. They will feel as if some one had been telling the preacher the secrets of their hearts, stripping off all disguises as no human wit could do, so that conscience shall own the inspiration of God. At the same time, the words of Scripture, originally coined out of just such experiences, will come home to them with a Divine verification. The Holy Ghost will enable the preacher to speak "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Other materials may be added out of philosophy, science, and criticism, which are no mean allies if used fitly and in moderation. But when the logical process enroaches on prayerful inquiry, and Philosophy with its allies begins to usurp the place of Scripture and study of the flock, the preacher's soul turns away from the lips of God; the message is patched with human reasoning;

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it soars away over the needs of the flock ; it gives science for Scripture, and an essay for a Divine message. The intellect may receive the product of the intellect, but the spirit feels no inspiration, and owns no voice of God.

These considerations warn us also against second-hand preaching in all its forms. It has always enervated the pulpit. To get a message from God, the preacher must go himself directly to God, inquire of Him, lay before Him the case of his people, be guided divinely into a deep and sympathetic acquaintance with their needs, and learn from the Holy Ghost how to apply God's word to their hearts. As a literary composition, or a theological essay, or in oratorical power for the people to whom it was originally delivered, the second-hand sermon may have superior power to anything the preacher can compose ; but it fails just here. It fails to be a message delivered by God to the preacher for his own flock in their present situation. It lacks present adaptation ; worse still, it lacks inspiration and sympathy.

4. And what is the preacher's message ? Still only this, *godly living*, nothing else. And this righteousness, while it vitalizes and determines conduct, lies wholly back of conduct. It is an inspiration in the soul, of faith in Christ, of loyalty to Christ, of love to Christ, working out in

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ministry to man. When it gets to its perfect bloom, *righteousness is love*, as our Saviour said it was. And this faith, this love, this righteousness, does not come from preaching apologetics, philosophy, and ethics, as the pulpit of the eighteenth century did with such disastrous results; neither can righteousness be compelled by discipline. *The one creative power of righteousness is preaching Christ.* Show Christ, paint the beauty of His holiness, exhibit His love, through the camera of your own heart cast His image on the hearts of your people, and then faith, loyalty, and love will spring up by the power of the Holy Ghost and truth; and when you have done that, you may leave the sinner in their hands.

5. Once more we insist that the preacher must adapt his message to the people. He will study how to get hold of their hearts by all the devices of true art—of rhetoric. Remember the masters, and with what toil they did their work. Simplify your message, find the deep, practical truths of religion, and tip their point with the choicest language culture can cull. Do not despise beauty in the sermon any more than in the Gothic glory of your temple, the painted windows which tint God's sunlight into sermons, the rich garniture of the chancel, and the lifting up of song and anthem by the trained inspiration of your singers.

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Beauty counts for as much in the sermon as in all these, and maybe more.

But, most of all, study the art of using motives. Neglect to touch no string that God has strung in the human soul. Get out all the music, from the deep base of fear and awe to the high-soaring notes of love and joy. The sinner will need them all to animate and move his truant soul. But remember that "perfect love casteth out fear." This is the end to work to. All the ages have been emphasizing fear; one generation at last has struck the Calvary note of love. It is the easiest task of eloquence to make "Felix tremble." But when Felix trembles, he wants to put off repentance to "a more convenient season." Make Felix repent *now*. The preacher must not only "reason about righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," but so present Christ in the beauty of His love that the heart of Felix will be drawn to Him; then show him the power of Christ to release him from sin and transform him into His own likeness; show him also God's image in him, its present ruin, its glorious capacity, its heavenly destiny, till he shall hate the old life, and gasp and grasp after the new life in Christ. Then Felix will want to repent *now*.

6. Take it as a final lesson of the ages of preaching, that the preacher must always have

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an eye to the elevation of Christian public opinion as well as to the immediate effect on individuals for present living. Not that he should separate them, for the two are bound up together so that they act and react on each other. But he must remember that one great purpose of preaching is to build up the kingdom of God in the realm of Christian sentiment. Every instruction in righteousness, every new glimpse of the spiritual world, every inspiration of each single member of the kingdom, is a direct contribution to the ever-swelling current of moral influences which is bearing down on all souls. Each tribute is a wave at some fountain-head to find issue at length into the great flood of public opinion. The preacher's aim will be enlarged, his action widened, his hope cheered, his inspiration charged with new vigor, by keeping in view this great system of moral forces which comes down to him from the ages, and takes up into itself all the contributions of his efforts, and carries them on to elevate the world long after he and his hearers have passed out of fellowship below, and shall render them again for his praise and joy when God shall make up the count of every toil, and proclaim the credit of every laborer who has labored in love.

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